

POEMS



FIRKINS

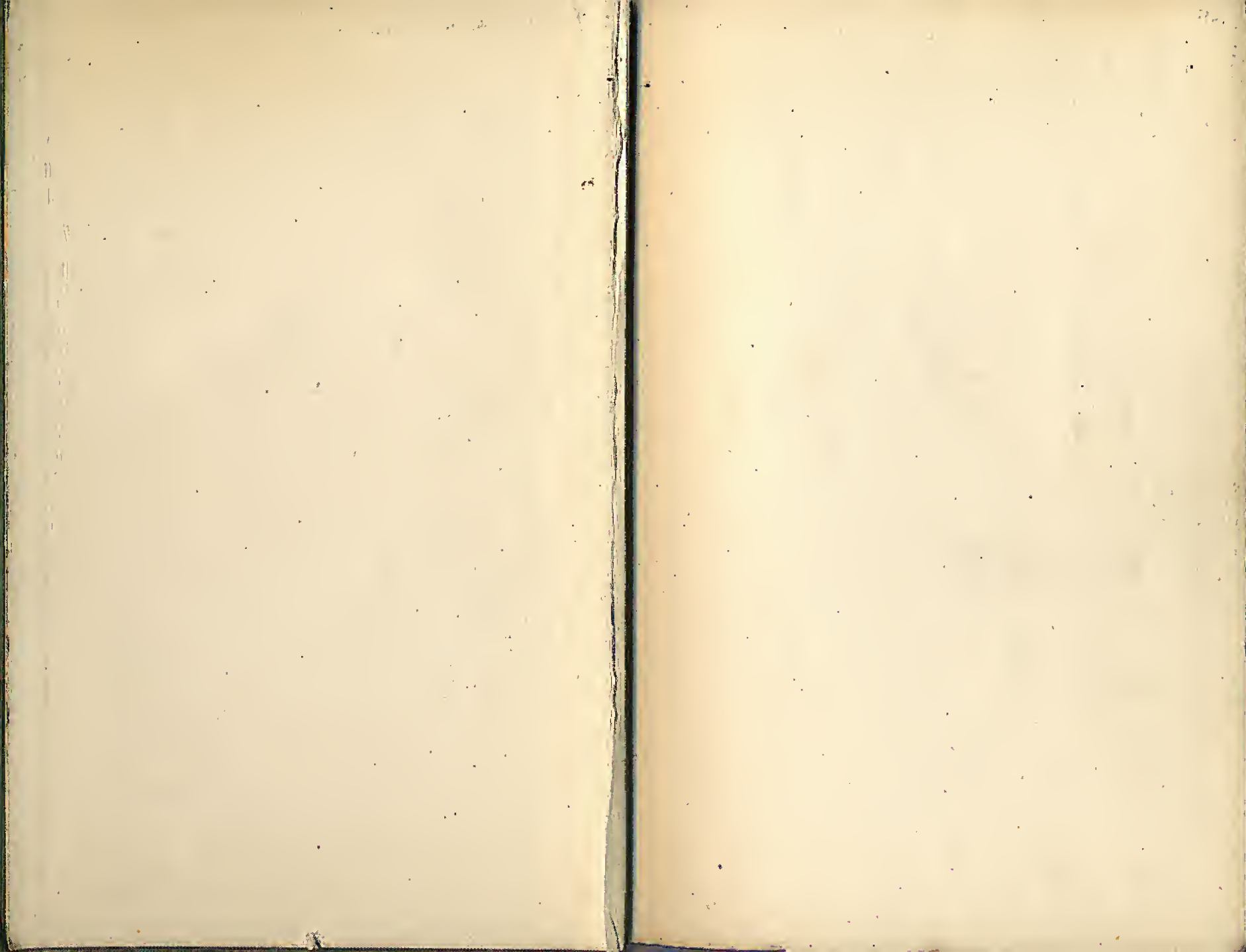
POEMS

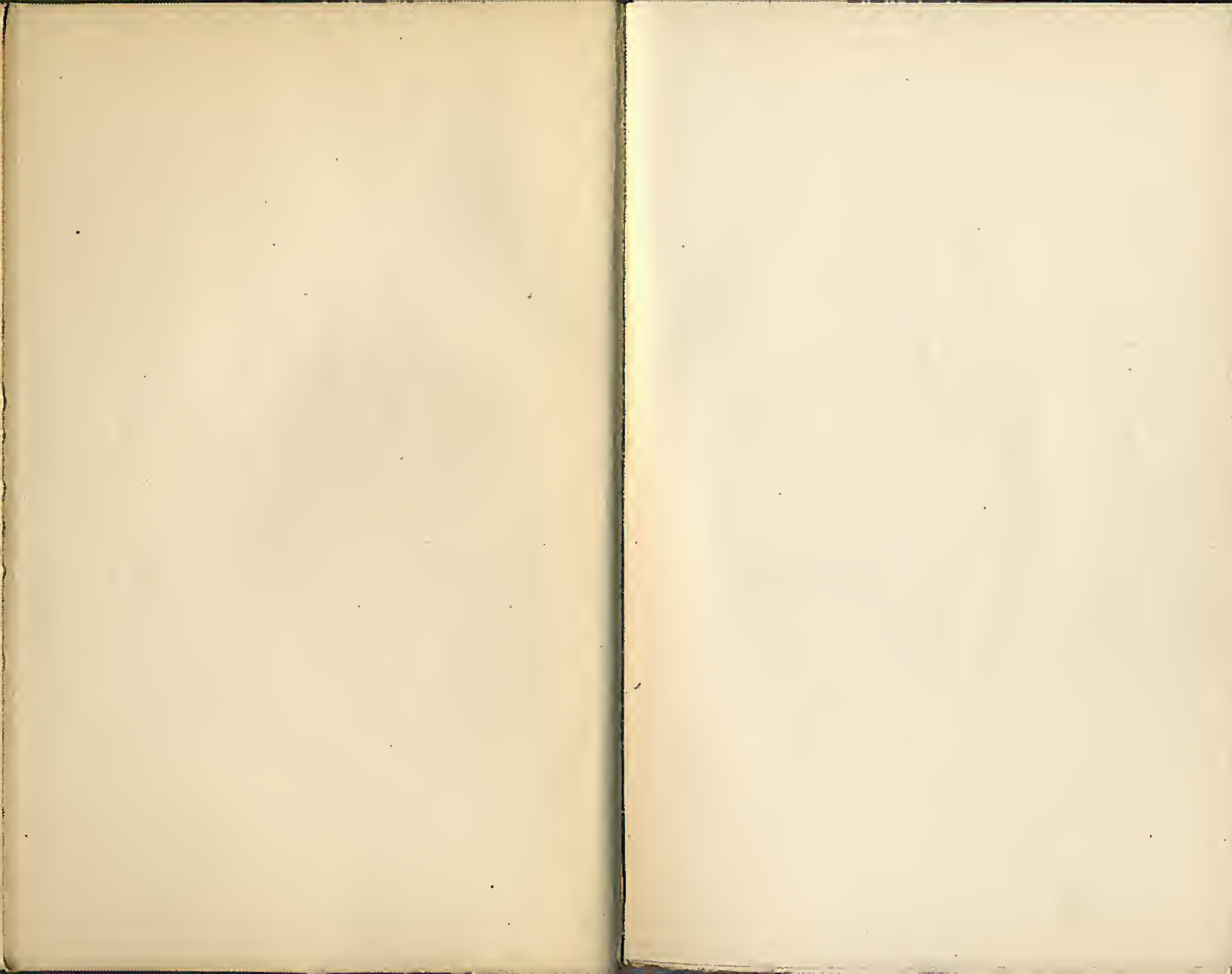
CHESTER FIRKINS

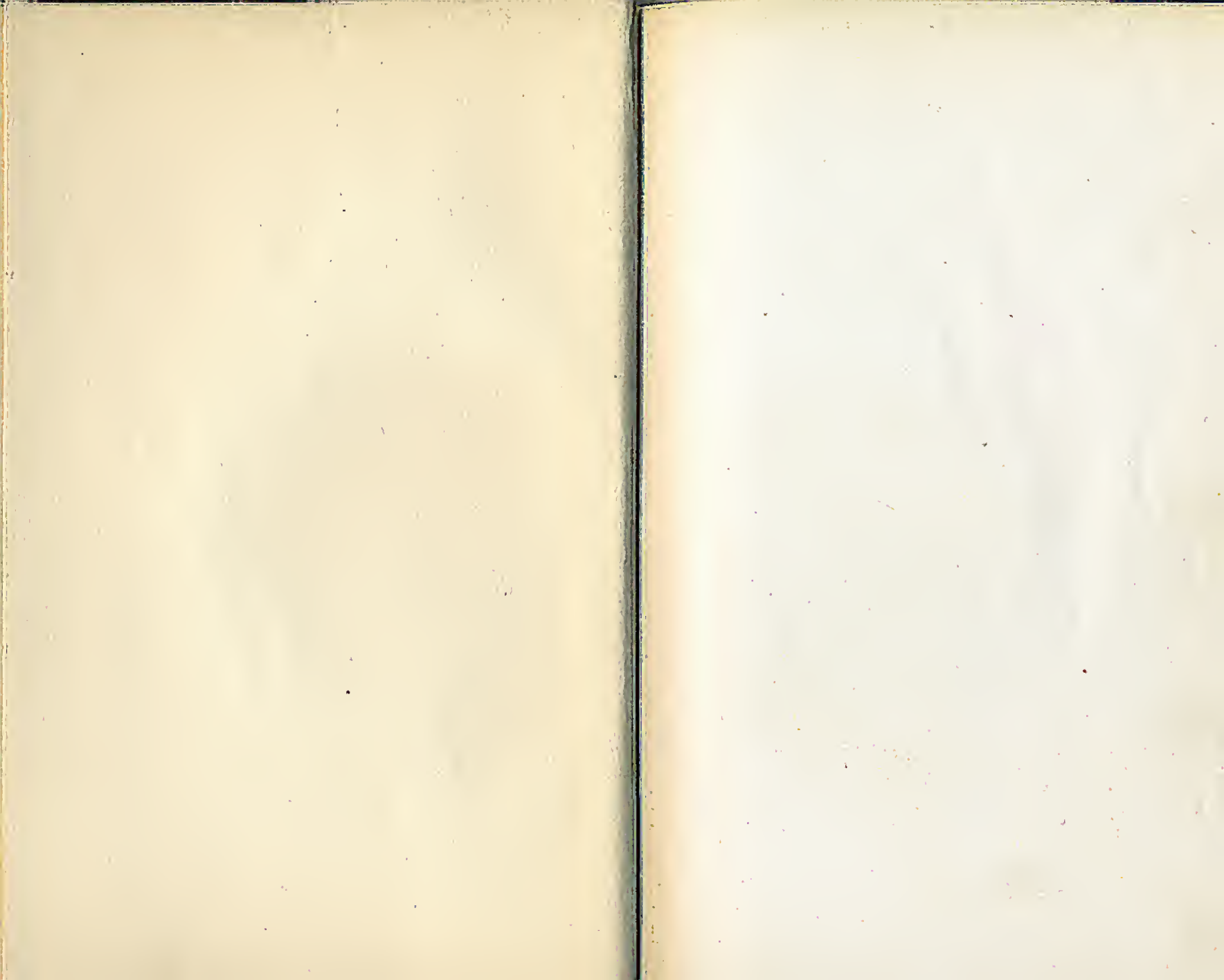
SHERMAN,
FRENCH &
COMPANY

S
POEMS

CHESTER FIRKINS









CHESTER FIRKINS

1892—1915

POEMS.

BY

CHESTER FIRKINS



BOSTON
SHERMAN, FRENCH & COMPANY
1916



CHESTER FIRKINS

1882—1915

POEMS

BY
CHESTER FIRKINS



BOSTON
SHERMAN, FRENCH & COMPANY
1916

COPYRIGHT, 1916
SHERMAN, FRENCH & COMPANY

NOTE

The courtesy of the editors of the following magazines and newspapers, in permitting me to reprint my brother's poems, is gratefully acknowledged: *Ainslee's Magazine*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The Canadian Magazine*, *The Independent*, *Lippincott's Magazine*, *Metropolitan*, *Munsey's Magazine*, *New York American*, *Outing*, *Overland Monthly*, *Puck*, *Smart Set*.

INA TEN EYCK FIRKINS.

THE LAST NIGHT IN THE HOUSE

BY OSCAR W. FIRKINS

NAY, dearest, in their quiet place
The violets leave, and near his face
Set roses in the gloom;
That, should he breathe once in the chill
(Such thing, by God's releasing will,
Might hap perchance when hearths are still),
His lips may breathe perfume.

And let one taper o'er his sleep
Its trembling, tender vigil keep,
Watchful and pale and clear;
That, if by strange, august decree
Those lids but once should lifted be,
The panes, the ceiling, he may see,
And know that he is here.

Nor leave unpressed the good-night kiss —
Good-night to all "Good-nights" is this —
(The lips are cold — touch but the hair)
In hope some thought's faint, hovering flake
The brain's deep apathy should break,
And he be glad should he awake
To feel our kisses there.

He will not speak when we are near;
He will not wake when we are here;
Of us who live the dead have fear —
Dear heart, come — come away!

Tread low! If soundless are our feet
 His heart may rouse to visions sweet,
 And love us in one long, last beat,
 Ere it be hushed for aye.

CONTENTS

POEMS OF CITY LIFE

	PAGE
A CRY IN THE MARKET PLACE	1
SUNDAY IN WALL STREET	2
ON A SUBWAY EXPRESS	4
TO A CITY	6
LIGHTS	8
SPRINGTIME IN THE CITY	9
SNOW IN THE CITY	10
STORM IN THE CITY	12
A GIFT OF ICE AMONG THE TENEMENTS	14
THE TENEMENT SONG	15
A LIGHT IN A TENEMENT WINDOW	17
MANHATTAN SPEAKS	18
THAT DEAR CONEY	20

POEMS OF THE NORTHWEST

VERSAILLES AND MINNESOTA	25
THE SAND SWALLOWS OF MINNEAPOLIS	27
THE CALL OF THE WATER COUNTRY	29
THE NORTH WIND'S MUSTERING	30
THE SOUL OF THE WEST	31
THE HERMIT OF GREAT RAINY	33
ON LAKE ITASKA	34
CANOE SONG OF THE NORTH	36
ALASKA	37
A HERO OF TO-DAY	38
CALL OF THE WHEAT	39

MISCELLANEOUS

THE DAUGHTER OF THE SIEUR LE SUEUR	43
THE MARCH TO YORKTOWN	45
NATHAN HALE	47
PETROSINO	49
MORGAN	51

	PAGE
WILBUR WRIGHT	53
GORGAS OF PANAMA	55
THE PASSING OF THE FIRE HORSE	58
MARCH	60
THE QUEST OF JUNE	61
IF JUNE WERE MINE	63
WAS IT IN JUNE?	64
JESUS UNTO MARY	65
CHRISTMAS EVE	68
FOR HOLIDAYS	70
CHRISTMAS	71
THE NORTHMAN'S CHRISTMAS TALE	73
THE REAPER	75
FOR THE SAKE OF A SONG	76
THE DEATH SONG OF SHELIM	77
DAWN	79
THE EVENING GLOW	80
WORTH WHILE	81
MY LADY OF DESPAIR	82
THE HILLS OF HOPE	83
WHO HATH NOT FACED?	84
LIFE'S DEAD	85
A SHIP OF WIDOWS	86
THE WANDERER	88
THE BALM OF YEARS	90
REPRIEVE	91
RETURNING	92
WHO CARES?	93
CAROL	94
SISTERHOOD	95
THE FLEET	96
FOR THE DEAD AIRMEN	98
A MESSAGE FROM MAGDALEN	99
THE SONG OF ODENATHUS	101
THE GNOME OF THE SEA	103
THE CHEATING OF THE SEA	104

	PAGE
THE STORM WRAITH	107
THE GHOSTS OF THE SEA	108
CHINA	110
THE CALL TO ARMS	112
THE SUNLIGHT ON THE SWORD	114

POEMS OF CHILDHOOD

THE CRIME OF BEING BOYS	119
SOME FRIENDS OF OURS	121
THE HOUSE OF BABIES	122
CHILD'S PLAY	124
AN OLD SWEETHEART OF YOURS	126
UPON THE ROAD TO TEN	128
TO PI YU	130
A COURTIER'S SONG	132
TO SANTA CLAUS	134
TO HIS CHRISTMAS BROTHER	135
THE PLOT AGAINST SANTA CLAUS	136
HOME ALONE	138

HUMOROUS VERSE

PERVERSITY	143
THE JILTING	144
ON THE WAY HOME	146
THE MARCH OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE	148
PERVERSITY	150
THE SUMMER MAID RIDES FORTH	151
WHAT'S THE ANSWER?	153
THE MAN WHO LOVES A JOKE	154
IN THE AEROPLANIC AGE	156
AS ALL OF THE FELLOWS DO	158
AN ALMANAC FOR CITY FOLKS	160
THE OUTCAST	162
ELEGY IN A LIT'RY CHURCHYARD	164
BALLADE OF MODERN ROMANCE	165
A PLEA FOR UNKNOWN AUTHORS	167

	PAGE
THE LATEST FIEND	169
A LETTER TO THE EDITOR	171
BALLADE OF SISTER'S BRASS	173
THE ADVERTISING BABY	175
SHE READ MY PALM	177
MONDAY BANNERS	178
THE OFFICE CAT	179
OYSTER SONG	181
THE POET'S CONSOLATION	182
THANKSGIVING	183
ON CHRISTMAS EVE	185
BALLADE OF SIR FURNACE	186
ON THE INSIDE	188
THE VISIONARY	190
AMBITION	192
DEBUTANTES	193
HOME NOTES	194
OH, GROGAN!	195
POOR CHILD	196
ON ACCOUNT	197
THE FINISH	198

POEMS OF CITY LIFE

A CRY IN THE MARKET PLACE

I CRY, O God, for refuge and for rest!

I cannot pray; — there is no time to kneel.

(Can the spoke stop the whizzing of the
wheel?

Can the cast coal in the red forge protest?)

I cry, by my dead fathers of the West,

Who, in their dire travail, yet could feel

The wild, clean pulse of Nature in the peal
Of storm upon the lordly mountain-crest.

I cry, by right of my ungotten sons,

For respite, for some slacking of the pace,

Some quiet in this rage of life that stuns

The Soul for slaughter in the Market Place.

I cry, in pity for the little ones,

Whose shriveled shoulders must bear on the
Race.

SUNDAY IN WALL STREET

ON Wall Street Trinity looks down.
Her proud and ancient architraves
Molded in simple friar-brown,
Among the old and storied graves.
Six days the city struggle beats,
The city clangor jars her gate;
To-day, above the silent streets,
She rules, vice-reine of God's estate.

Six days the spire-clock marks fast
The burdened minutes of the mart,
The victor, on the tide upcast,
The loser, bowed with broken heart —
Here, on the steeple writ, they see
Each moment's fateful shibboleth,
Marking the triumph that may be,
Marking the ruin that is death.

But now the brazen hands are slow;
The deep bells ring in solemn round,
Now hushed the holy hours go,
Where few pass by — and without sound.
Now, down its builded cavern-hall,
Wall Street in mighty silence lies,
The spell of God's rest over all;
The peace that is Man's lordliest prize.

Not in your hot, tempestuous days,
Your battles in the life-mart rolled,
But proudest now, old street, you raise
Your granite monuments to Gold.
What empires totter here — who knows?
What fates of many a royal crown!
Yet stand you in this grand repose,
Silent, where Trinity looks down.

ON A SUBWAY EXPRESS

I, who have lost the stars, the sod,
For chilling pave and cheerless light,
Have made my meeting-place with God
A new and nether Night —

Have found a fane where thunder fills
Loud caverns, tremulous; — and these
Atone me for my reverend hills
And moonlit silences.

A figment in the crowded dark,
Where men sit muted by the roar,
I ride upon the whirring Spark
Beneath the city's floor.

In this dim firmament, the stars
Whirl by in blazing files and tiers;
Kin meteors graze our flying bars,
Amid the spinning spheres.

Speed! speed! until the quivering rails
Flash silver where the head-light gleams,
As when on lakes the Moon impales
The waves upon its beams.

Life throbs about me, yet I stand
Outgazing on majestic Power;
Death rides with me, on either hand,
In my communion hour.

You that 'neath country skies can pray,
Scoff not at me — the city clod; —
My only respite of the Day
Is this wild ride — with God.

TO A CITY

And thou art now the master; I, the slave;
The days of my defiance are as dust
On the departed years' swift-crumbling pave;
The sword of my rebellion is but rust;
Against thy spell I am no longer brave.

Nine breathless summers I have seen the kill
Of blood-beamed suns upon the stony street;
Nine winters I have watched the wanton spill —
The price of lives at Pleasure's dancing feet;
Nine years beheld man worship his own will —
Pure Faith forgot and Truth made obsolete.

And every staring face among the throng —
Poor puny sons of greed-besotten men —
Turned me with yearning to the calm, the
strong,
The clear-browed people of my West again;
And every roaring day but made me long
For benign silence in some mountain glen.

Today I am returned from the clean wild,
Where only Storm's deep organ preludes mar
The hush of wood-cathedrals, river-aisled;
Where Earth's pure altars of communion are,
'Neath ceilings of the night, inlaid and tiled
With ivory of moonlight, pearl of star.

I am returned unto the man-made hills —
The windowed cliffs, whose crevices are
homes —
But a new light my startled being thrills!
Here storm is slaved! The human river
roams
O'er bedded lightning, tamed to human wills,
'Mid thunder, through subaquean catacombs.

I hear the tumult of the conquered seas
That beat their vain rebellion 'gainst thy
wall;
Eld Night illumed in burning harmonies
Of lights that fashion morn from even-fall;
Time, sound, the winds and the wide distances
Are but the serfs and vassals of thy hall.

And thou art now the master; I, the slave;
But 'round my bondage is a glory thrown;
I have found Peace upon thy echoing pave,
Silence in throngs, beauty in builded stone —
Where Nature yields, I dare not lift the glaive!

LIGHTS

Cold on the icy pavement's glare,
Or haloed by the rain,
The city's lights, through murky nights,
Their quiet guard maintain.
To east and west their measured files
Stretch down the silent street,
And south and north reach firmly forth
Their shining arms that meet.

Ye city lights, ye city lights,
That guide my farer's way
Through deeps of dark that gather stark
Upon the edge of day,
What mystery of magic lore
Enfolds your human moods;
What glamor deep, of worlds that sleep
And dream, about you broods?

Ye city lights, ye city lights,
That flash your cheer to me,
From golden charm of field and farm
And sunlight's panoply,
What is it lures my footsteps back
From out the throngs of men,
Through silent nights, ye city lights,
To walk with you again?

SPRINGTIME IN THE CITY

SUNLIGHT that shudders in the leaden air,
Dark with warm up-reck of the firstling thaw,
With rivulets that sweep the crossing bare
And thunder darkly in the gutter's maw.

Blithe, aimless throngs that lightly come and
go,
With joyous eye alight and foot aswing,
Lured by an opiate breeze that whispers low:
"The woods have lit the tapers of the
Spring."

SNOW IN THE CITY

On prairie waste or mountain peak
The snow lies desolate and bleak —
Grand, yet repellent as the Sea —
A menace in its mystery.
The flake soft-swaying on the branch
May join the fearful avalanche;
And silent samite fields encrust
The deadly blizzard's icy dust.

But on the city's blackened walls
The snow with kindlier magic falls.
There the wild storm-hosts pitch their tents
In beauty and beneficence.
The rough, gray world that grimly lay
Beneath the dusk of yesterday
Gleams through the glory of the morn
In hallowed purity reborn.

The fences 'round the flat-house pile
Are white-plumed guards in shining file;
The clothes-lines in their humble place
Have grown into Venetian lace;
The postman down the street draws near,
Hoar-bearded as majestic Lear,
And crowds that scurry through the cold
Are haloed like the saints of old.

There is a Spirit in the snow
That only city folk may know;
For something of its healing art,
That soothes the stone, can save the heart.
Cloaked in a purer garb we find
The rougher contours of the mind.
To cassocked Earth the snow may be
The surplice of divinity.

STORM IN THE CITY

SMOKE-MIST over the blaze

Of the smothered Sun at morning,
And a leaden air that weighs
On the wizened streets with warning;

Darkness at noon; the lights

From the million panes of the towers
Spatter the granite heights
Like fluttering forge-spark showers;

Scurry of hastening crowds

And a tumult of teams that blunder,
As the flame fangs rend the clouds
To the far beast-growl of thunder.

Big, slow blots on the pave,

And, wild in the wind-gust swirling,
Dances the dust to its grave
In the flood that is down a-whirling.

Walls and ramparts of rain!

That, cliff-like, shatter and crumble,
Only to tower again
And fall in the flare and the rumble.

And the wizened streets draw breath,

And the withered leaves that were lying
Burned at the breast of Death
Awake to the new life crying.

Say you the wrath of God

Speaks in the storm to the City? —
Then is the chastening rod
Fashioned of Love and Pity.

A GIFT OF ICE AMONG THE TENEMENTS

Rough jewel from the wild North's rugged
mine,
Here set in urban Summer's tarnished gold,
Warm emerald deeps and diamond corners cold,
Once you gleamed bright in Winter's pale sun-
shine,

When red suns shone on mornings crystalline.
Trembling the mighty river 'neath you rolled;
You saw the hoar stars fret the heavens old
With frosty tapestries of fair design.

These huddling forms that crave your cooling
breath

Were tortured by the cold that gave you
birth.

Here, where the hot breeze bears the chill of
death

You bring them life from elemental earth;
'Mongst these strayed sons of Ruth and Ash-
toreth,

Strong lives are bought with this bright bauble's
worth.

THE TENEMENT SONG

I AM the Ark of all the breeds
Of all the lands of Earth;
I hear the prayers of all the creeds —
At wedlock, death or birth;
I shelter grand and dismal deeds,
And misery and mirth.

I am a World in little place;
The men of East and West,
Of every tongue, of every race,
Within my portals rest;
All Life, within a moment's space,
'Twixt these grim walls compressed.

The birthday merry-makers meet
The coffin on the stair;
Behind the door where lovers greet
Lies widowhood's despair;
And Youth and Joy, with flying feet,
Pass crabbed Age and Care.

Parted by but a flimsy wall,
Here Sin and Virtue dwell;
A poet starves across the hall
From fools who feed them well;
The patriot exile waits his call
Beside the robber's cell.

I gather men from far and wide
And house them darkly here;
But though I place them side by side,
I cannot bring them near;
Grim walls unseen their souls divide —
The walls of pride and fear.

A LIGHT IN A TENEMENT WINDOW

THE frozen city, muffled in the night,
Lies cold and soundless. Shivering, I creep
Through narrow lanes, where tired thousands
sleep.

Of all the windows, one alone is bright.
High in that little room where glows the light,
Doth Revel grin or hungered Sorrow weep?
Or Death or Birth the lonely vigil keep?
Who knows? And yet it is a cheerful sight.

So through the dark that wraps all human
things,

In the wide, sleeping city of my Soul,
God's easement bright holds dim imaginings.

Death or New Birth, sorrow or joy, my goal?
I cannot tell; yet hope still shines for me
Through the warm window of Eternity.

MANHATTAN SPEAKS

I AM grown old and battle-wise,
Laden with largess, glut with spoils;
The guerdon of my flights and toils
Lies far beneath my million eyes.

Of triumph I am sated long,
But in my blindness I have bred
Daughters to pity, sons to dread —
Victorious, carnal; brave — and wrong.

They worship Joy; they pray to Gold;
Yet build they grandly in their pride
Beneath the land, beneath the tide;
Their highways cleave my rock and mold.

The sea gales beat upon my wall
A hundred fathoms up the air.
(O reckless children, be ye ware!
For steel is mortal, stone will fall.)

Yea, I am clothed in strength and fame,
But sometimes on a night of snow
A little town of Long Ago
Looms ghostly through my cliff's aflame —

A town, unvalled against the Wild,
That nestled once among my trees;
Hope, Courage, God, her deities —
My ever-young, my eldest child!

To-day's mad sons I never bore!
Their ways I may not understand,
Save when their grimed sea-cities land
Awed peoples from an alien shore.

Limned then on startled lips I see
The glory of my youth arise:
So Verrazano's wondering eyes;
So gallant Hudson gazed on me!

I am grown old, but not in years,
For all the lands of all the world
Their wisdom and their sins have hurled
To age me with a thousand fears.

Father of Cities and of Men,
Purge this old monarch grown a slave,
Gyved by gray wharf and stony pave;
Purge me and make me proud again!

THAT DEAR CONEY

A city walled against the golden day,
A city starless in the silver night,
Hath reared in glory, down her teeming bay,
Past many a roaring quay,
Electra's Temple pinnacled with light.

Fountains ablaze and whirling wheels of fire,
A phantom garden by the rumbling sea;
Not Ctesiphon nor flame-adoring Tyre,
Not Carthage's red pyre
E'er burned the night to such a brilliancy.

Bright mirrored towers tremble in the wave;
My black prow cleaves through faery citadels;
I gaze upon a deep, enchanted pave,
Some sea-tombed city's grave,
Whence music 'mid the voice of revel wells.

The ghostly castles crumble; but the cry,
The song, the shouting grow; and far away
Weird echo-voices call me as they fly:
"Come! Join the night city at her play!
Forget the dark of day;
For here the ways of light and laughter lie."

O night! O stars! O mystic silences!
Symbols of Peace and of the brooding God,

Now art thou lost; now am I one of these
Mad pagans, banished of the Sun and Sod!
With Magic sandals shod,
I join the new-crowned Bacchus revelries!

Yet is there solemn beauty in great joy:
The merriment of multitudes is clean.
As the pure tides the beaches' reek destroy,
And ring the guiding buoy,
So crowds uplift the weak, engulf the mean.

O city, walled against the golden day,
O city, starless in the silver night,
Build on, build on, adown the teeming bay,
Your blazing bastions gay;
Lead on your sons to Laughter, and the
Light!

POEMS OF THE NORTHWEST

VERSAILLES AND MINNESOTA

SONG OF THE SIEUR DU LHUT

"Daniel Greysolon Du Lhut was continually in the forest, in the Indian towns, or in remote wilderness outposts planted by himself, exploring, trading, fighting, ruling lawless savages and whites scarcely less ungovernable, and, on one or more occasions, varying his life by crossing the ocean to gain interviews with the Colonial Minister, Seignelay, amid the splendid vanities of Versailles." — PARKMAN.

*Not in tears, my siren treasure,
Trip we love's last minuet;
Well we knew 'twas but a measure —
Then — forget.
I, who dream the West World's glory,
You, the glory of Versailles —
We have lived our happy story;
Now — good-by!*

Above the music of the dance,
Athwart the palace windows' glow,
I hear the cry of purer France;
I see red camp-fires in the snow.
This is not home — my hearth and hall
Shift through an untracked forest-way,
Somewhere 'twixt Mississippi's fall
And four log walls by Thunder Bay.

To-night, mayhap, on Pepin's breast,
My periled fellows hush the oar,
Past the wild, gallant foe, who rest,
Past war-boats lined along the shore.

Mayhap far north the trail-ax cleaves
On paths the plunging deer has torn,
Where, in the world-roof's flooded eaves,
The River of the World is born!

No stolen prize of galleon gold,
No wealth of mountain mines I bring;
Only a wilderness of cold,
Only an empire for my king.
Ah, fair one, could I paint for you
My lakes beyond the inland seas,
Where moaning forests break the blue
As ocean breaks the Cyclades!

Ho! my comrades, priest and rover!
Trimmed, my ship rides in the bay.
Ho! my exile days are over!
Now — away!
Pray, no tears, my pretty treasure;
Come, 'tis love's last minuet.
Step we but one merry measure —
Then — forget.

THE SAND SWALLOWS OF MINNEAPOLIS

WHITE cliff and rolling river,
And over them only the sky;
Thus has the Master-giver
Housed them and let them fly.
Age upon eon follows,
Races and forests fall;
Still nest the white-sand swallows
In old St. Anthony's wall.

I, that am young, a-dreaming,
And you, that are centuries old,
Both know the swift wings gleaming —
I and Père Louis, the bold!
Fleeing the red foe's pyres
Two hundred years ago,
Found he these soaring choirs
Where now wide cities grow.

Hail to ye, winged warders!
In your carven watch-towers high;
Be ye, perchance, recorders
Of that hero-world gone by?
Oh, for those storied pages,
Tales of my sword-won land,
That ye hold through the changing ages
In your caves of the snow-white sand!

White breast and brown wings swerving,
And under them ever the roar
Of brown Mississippi, curving
Adown his cliff-locked shore.
Bard after warrior follows,
Yet never to bard shall fall
The lore of the white-sand swallows
In old St. Anthony's wall.

THE CALL OF THE WATER COUNTRY

TAKE me back, ye whispering friars;
House me, oh, ye priestly pines;
Where the twanging wild-crane choirs
Thunder from the water-vines.
Heart-stained, out of sin and city
Purge me, oh, my northland air!
Breathe, ye blue nun lakes, in pity,
For your prodigal, a prayer.

To your altars, Mississippi,
In the North's wild garden-land,
Where some western-world Philippi
Strewed its arrows in the sand,
Take me home, from seas and highlands,
Give me back my brown canoe;
Let me, 'mongst your rice-fringed islands,
Build my beggared hopes anew.

Take me home from churchly palace,
Gilded priest and glittering grail;
My two oar-browned hands for chalice,
At God's first communion-rail.
Take me home across the marches;
Only there my heart can pray,
Where, beneath, your forest arches,
Knelt God's warrior, Nicollet!

THE NORTH WIND'S MUSTERING

From the dark of the boreal seas,
From the midnight morn of the Pole,
To the sands of your Southland leas,
Where sweltering cities roll;
From the still of the Caves of the Cold,
To the resonant marches of men,
By the wind that runs, I summon my sons
To the arms of the North again.

To the ships of the scurrying main,
Where the stern-wheels southward thrum,
To the lands of the Sun and the Rain,
On the wings of the dark I come;
And never thy Love, nor the lure
Of thy Fame shall make thee free,
For a sail or a soul, at my rallying roll,
Must turn to the North with me.

Ye have fathomed the fines of the East
And the reach of the West ye know,
And the wilds of the Earth, as the beast
Ye have tamed to the whip and the hoe;
But the breath of my pitiless plains.
Ye have faced — Ye have failed of the goal;
And the drums of the North, they shall summon
ye forth,
Till ye win to the prize of the Pole!

1906

THE SOUL OF THE WEST

I AM the soul of the West,
God of the soil and the sea;
Brave men have named me blest,
And I have made them free.
I am the will of the West
And the day of my might is done,
For the hand of man hath bridged the span
And the East with the West is one.

Out of the childhood of Time,
From the peopled realms of the Day,
Out of a gilded clime,
With fair-forged hearts for the fray,
Out of the seas' cold rime,
Toward the edge of the boundless blue,
To fields afar by my guiding star,
I've battled the brave seas through.

Nations have sprung amain,
Proud from the loins of War;
Roman and Gaul and Dane
Fought to the fray and the fore;
Galleys of golden Spain,
Helméd by a soul of the sea,
Through storm and night, through fear and
fight
Rode into the West with me.

Lo! I have led my way,
With the sons who shared my cheer;
Lo! in the whisk of a day
I have traversed the axled sphere;
And the fruit of my toil shall stay,
Though the pride of my might is done;
For the heart of man has bridged the span
And the East with the West is one.

THE HERMIT OF GREAT RAINY

ON great Lake Rainy winter lays
A hand that chokes all human ways;
Then is my revel of duress,
My luxury of loneliness!

Men ask what crazèd thing am I
That, blithe with youth, from cities fly.
I answer: I am one who knows
The song of winds, the warmth of snows.

Not from the shadow of defeat,
Nor woe of love, my wild retreat;
No monkish eremite I pray
Close in my cell, by night and day —

But hermit of the shifting trail,
When on far ice the wolf-bands wail;
Or through the blizzard's icy dust
My snowshoes skim the under-crust.

Oh, when the last call bids me go
To break new paths in God's clean snow,
May northern night my death enfold
And steel stars flash on flinten cold!

ON LAKE ITASKA

I've heard the Wood Lake's bob-cat snarl,
Above the songs the paddles sing,
The laughter of the Lac qui Parle,
The loon's scream on great Koochiching.
But in my northland water wilds,
My roving heart forevermore
Thrills with the soul-throb of a child's,
At evening, on Itaska's shore.

Oh, life is but a little thing,
In primal worlds of earth and air,
And man's bright birth-awakening
Is shadowed by his death's despair;
But he has trod the gods' demesne,
In dawn of an eternal morn,
Who, 'neath the lonely pines, has seen
The mighty Mississippi born!

Oh, river of my blood and kind,
Sprung of the woods that are my home,
I've watched your spreading waters wind
In silent calm and rock-rent foam.
I've spanned brave Pepin's breadth of blue
And dallied through your delta sands,
But still my proudest dreams of you
Wait in that northern land of lands!

Athwart the gold path of the moon,
My loved canoe drifts through the night —
Far, far away, the wailing loon —
The moose-call from the wooded height —
A lazy brook that streams away,
To roll in grandeur to the sea!
Father of Waters — child for ay,
In that great North of you and me!

CANOE SONG OF THE NORTH

On lakes adream our paddles gleam,
Ashore the grim pines croon;
On waves of light we ride the bright
Gold highways of the moon.
Past reedy isles where summer smiles,
Ho, merry bark, let's go
And find the way of Nicollet —
The footsteps of Perrot!

To glide and creep on worlds that sleep,
Where waking wild fowl scream;
To drone and drift, till rivers lift
Their luring banks abeam;
And then, and then, to face again
The white-tipped rapid's roar,
And, battle-spent, to shore and tent!
Ah, who would ask for more?

Venetian ways are sweet with lays
That sailing lovers sing!
And lakes are fair in Alpine air,
Whence castled rivers swing;
But over sea, for you and me,
Our dearer waters flow
Where lies the way of Nicollet,
The footsteps of Perrot!

ALASKA

WE hold you not as children do
The mother soul that gave them birth;
We be but brother kin of you —
Wild creatures of a wilder earth.
Yet dearer to the exiled heart
Than lure of home, or lovers' rose,
Throbs o'er our yearning leagues apart
The cry of the eternal snows!

Last refuge of a restless race,
Last prize of a primeval land,
Who once hath thrived the serried glace,
Or delved the sunlight of the sand,
Who once hath walked the verge of death,
Unclothed before his living God —
He cannot breathe the milder breath,
He will not rest 'neath southern sod!

Claimed in the burning of our youth,
Untaught for that we ventured on,
We pledged the gallant *Sieur Du Luth*
And many-daring *Radisson*.
We shall return to skies of blue,
From ice-locked cities sailing forth;
But we shall come again to you,
Our brother-mother of the north!

A HERO OF TO-DAY

MAN's battle-march into the West is done,
And Eldorado's beacons gleam no more
With flare of fame, of fortune, and of war,
To tempt young-eyed Adventure's sworded son.
And yet, who says the hero-quest is won,
While still the unconquered up-world's wonder bars
Man's very dreams, and still the beckoning stars
Cry, "Come! The scheme of God is but begun?"
When, in the last long fall, I reel to death,
My frail shell wrecked upon the cloud's gray rim,
Say not, "'Tis horror!"— Say, "We follow him!"
Or when, above the air, I die for breath,
Say not, "He failed"; but, soaring after, say,
"He was but one we lost on God's great way."

CALL OF THE WHEAT

With a bumper crop on the fields the farmers of the Northwest cannot get enough men to harvest it.

THEY cry for bread, they cry for bread,
When Winter walls them 'round.
The city sees her hungered dead
Borne to the burial ground.

They look in wonder on a world
That cannot give them food;
They sleep in icy alleys, curled
Like beasts within a wood.

I cry for men, I cry for men
When rolls the harvest wain
And far upon my fields again
Waves bright the ripened grain.

I look in wonder on the ways
Of them that cannot give
The little labor of few days
To let their children live.

They cry for work, they cry for work
Within the smothered town,
Where miseries of ages lurk
To crush and cast them down.

I cry for aid, I cry for aid,
I call for them to come

And glean the riches God has laid
Upon my prairie home;

And I will give them life and heart,
Will they but lend a hand
And hasten from their sordid mart
To save my golden land.

Oh, come! Oh, come, ye blinded men!
And take the gift I hold,
That when the hunger comes again
Thy sin shall not be told!

MISCELLANEOUS

THE DAUGHTER OF THE SIEUR LE
SUEUR

My happy France, I dare not reck
How sweet thy moonlit gardens call,
Here 'neath grim bastions of Quebec
Or brown log walls of Montreal;
Mine, mine the wild, the wanderer's lure,
For I was made — by Mary's will —
The daughter of the Sieur Le Sueur,
The bride of Iberville.

The wind wails cold along the shore;
O God, to-night upon the sea
My Love sails in the northern war;
Pray bring him safely back to me!
My proud gray father braves the wild
To far Louisiana's rim;
Now, Holy Mary, by Thy Child,
Hear Thou my loving prayers for him.

Again! The music in my ear! —
Dear France, my beautiful and blest,
Weary with yearning, spent with fear,
My heart cries out for you, for rest!
But hark! what clatter at the gate?
Doth now the red foe strike at last?
Nay, now! — Pierre! — Oh, heart elate!
My love, my warrior, hold me fast!

Farewell, fond dream of courtiered halls,
Of merry song, of stately dance;
I would not change my loop-holed walls
To-night for all the pride of France!
And sweet is sorrow to endure
For one who holds — by Mary's will —
The glory of the Sieur Le Sueur,
The love of Iberville!

THE MARCH TO YORKTOWN

OCTOBER 19, 1781

OVER the Hudson, southward ho!
Where do the northern armies go?
British of Clinton watch and wait,
Safe by their ships, at the harbor gate,
Wait for the battle that never comes;
Southward clatter the "rebel" drums.
Straight and swift as a great arm's blow,
Washington rides with Rochambeau.

Greene has sped, with his matchless men,
Winning the Carolinas again;
Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown lies,
(Girt by the sea, 'neath summer skies,)
Yorktown, where, like a hand of fate,
Lafayette guards the landward gate.
Camps of the South, they cry to know
Whither the northern armies go.

Down through Trenton, where, one wild night,
River and foe he won in fight,
Washington rides — but why? but where? —
Tracing the line of the Delaware.
Philadelphia! Now, at last,
Flutter the tidings far and fast;
Over the land they know, they know
Whither the northern armies go!

Rattle of arms in the old town streets,
Blithe fife whistles and gay drum beats,
Music of doom, O Royal George!
These are the fellows of Valley Forge!
War-worn homespun and wound-scarred brow,
Halt they never for plaudits now;
(More than flowers fair ladies throw),
Onward, onward the armies go!

British of Yorktown wake too late;
Washington knocks at the landward gate;
Guns of the northmost Hudson speak
Now on the shores of the Chesapeake.
Out from the wreck of his crumbling walls
One brave sortie the Briton calls;
Backward he reels — a beaten foe —
Onward the northern armies go!

Over the land the glad news flies,
Over the earth a wild surprise;
Out of the North (oh, magic-shod,
March who fight by the will of God!)
Length of the land an army hurled,
Strikes with a blow that thrills the world!
On, where the souls of glory go,
Washington rides with Rochambeau!

NATHAN HALE

*Somewhere beneath the thundering city's pave,
An unmarked grave;
Somewhere in the vast spaces beyond Time,
A fame sublime;
And that is all we watchers here below
May dream or know
Of him, the tranquil and intrepid soul
Who died for us amid the death-drum's roll
In Henry Rutgers's orchard long ago.*

You've been, perchance, in Market street,
Where now the weary, hurrying feet
Of thousands clatter, day by day,
To join the throngs of East Broadway;
Where creak and crash of car and dray
Mingle with children's voices sweet;
Where poverty and sorrow meet,
And yet where some seem always gay.

Though toil and tumult wrap you 'round,
Tread softly — it is holy ground!
'Twas in September of the year
When Liberty first lifted clear
Her daring sword, they brought him here,
And slew him as he faced them, bound,
And buried him without a mound
Or yet a blossom for his bier!

Oh, if your heart as mine doth burn,
These tenemental walls will turn
Into a yellowing orchard close,
With redcoat men in silent rows;
And he, in high, serene repose,
Lifts eyes that but a moment yearn
Toward his torn letters 'mongst the fern
As proudly to his doom he goes.

*Somewhere beneath the thundering city's pave,
An unmarked grave;
But is not the great city o'er him sprent
His better monument?
These mingling sons of Cæsar and of Shem,
He died for them!
The tumult of the hosts he helped to free,
The roar of the wide mart, his elegy,
His solemn and triumphant requiem!*

PETROSINO

VAGUELY, with neither praise nor blame,
We, in our guarded, safe repose,
Knew him, by name, as one of those
Who walk the darkness of the days.

We did not understand, as now,
That Death walked with him through the
years,
Though never thought of faltering fears
Paled the high courage of his brow.

We did not know, when evening skies
Shone on our rest or pleasuring,
That any dusk his doom might bring —
The End was ever in his eyes.

And still, with laughter and with love,
He went his shadow-haunted way;
The martyrdom we mourn to-day
Needs none to tell how well he strove.

He died for us, across the sea —
A people alien to his race —
He died *for us* amid the grace
And flowers of his Italy.

He has come "home" — to sleep — to rest
Here where men plotted all his harm;

Our sterner hearts above him, warm,
Our colder blossoms on his breast.

Here is no deed-effacing death;
Here is no triumph for his foes;
Forth his unbannered battle goes!
His spirit breathes eternal breath!
1909.

MORGAN

HE died in Rome — the modern Cæsar — grim,
Yet wisely gentle. By what logic lore
Did the eternal Fates decree for him
A death by ancient Tiber's storied shore?
The monarch hills — imperial seven — rear
Their crests above his bier.

He whose great will was lordly round the earth;
He to whom kings paid tribute, despots
bowed;
He died where the world-masters had their birth
And slaved kings moved amid the triumph-
crowd.
He who the fate of falling thrones ordained
Died where Augustus reigned.

He whose strong hand could wake the wilder-
ness,
And rend the dark of ages by its might;
Whose golden power was bespread to bless
Far lands with the new-riven highway's
light —
He died where first the great world-makers
showed
God's law was: Build a road.

He who, in later days, after the strife
Of gain, gave of his worship and his gold

To Art, to Beauty, to the things of life
That are eternal, holy, manifold —
He died where wise Aurelius once bore
The sceptre of sweet lore.

What were his deeds and what his soul's stern
guide

We need not sanction and we need not say;
We need but know that 'mongst the kings of
pride

Who held in gilded Rome their proud array
Another "Emperor" lies dead, and now
Our laurel crowns his brow.

April, 1913.

WILBUR WRIGHT

AND must we lay him also 'neath the sod,
The lord and lover of the boundless sky,
Who ever starward turned his daring eye,
Who first the firmament's bright highway trod
And, building for mankind, communed with
God?

Shall the light-giver in the darkness lie?
Will not his soaring soul the tomb defy
And his great heart renounce the binding clod?

Shall we not, rather, launch upon the breeze
And steer aloft his argosies of air,
And in a hollowed urn his ashes bear
Up where the cloud tops surge like golden seas
Beneath the sun, and to the winds consign
The dust of what in him was not divine?

Nay! Let him dwell in Death as in the span
Of Life — plain country blossoms for his
grave;

For he to whom great kings and peoples gave
Frank homage in the watching world's wide
scan —

He knew no pride, save the impassioned plan
To make the fickle air his fearful slave.
In elemental battle grimly brave,
Yet Earth had never known a gentler man.

How should vain pomps and eulogies endow
With greater glory one whose deed and name
Are writ upon the page of endless fame?
And what are laurels for that death-pale brow
That once in life thrilled to the joyous sting
Of raging winds envassalled to his wing?

1912.

GORGAS OF PANAMA

Colonel William Crawford Gorgas is Sanitation Officer of the Panama Canal Zone. The last barriers between the oceans were blown up last week.

THEY have delved their way
By night and day
Through the swamp-fog gray,
Where the shovel tugs.
They have fought the fight
Of the dynamite
Through the rock-hill's height —
He — he fought bugs.

In their God-willed aim
They have won the game,
And they stand in fame
Where their triumph is.
Their task — the brave —
Was to join the wave;
But just to save
Their lives was HIS.

There is splendor big
In the derrick rig
When a man can dig
A half-world through.
He left the cheers
For the engineers
While he learned the meres
Mosquitoes knew.

In a blast-flame's beam
They could shift a stream
And stitch a seam
Through a mountain's wall.
From brine to brine
They were firm and fine —
But an ash-can line
Was the guard of all.

Brave rank on rank,
By the Chagres bank,
The Frenchmen sank
In the fever fog,
And the vast deed left,
Of its glory reft,
In the deadly cleft
Of the Gatun bog.

Ours — ours went through
With their mighty crew,
And well they knew
Where the fight was won.
Nor brawn nor grit
Is the help for it
When a man is hit
By the tropic sun.

There's the hero call,
In the crashing fall
Of the far dike's wall
And the heart-string tugs.

[56]

From sea to sea
They have fought to free
The world-bar. He —
He just fought bugs.

1913.

[57]

THE PASSING OF THE FIRE HORSE

With quick-nerved hooves still lifted high,
With supple limb but drooping eye,
A tugging dray-team passed me by
Along the thoroughfare,
When sudden clanged the warning bell;
The auto siren's rolling swell
Rose menacing, and, wailing, fell
Upon the startled air.

With jolt and rumble, swerve and turn,
Swift through the traffic's busy churn,
Rude, splendid, merciful and stern,
The fire-truck rolls down.
Tall fellows clinging to the side,
Who don their helmets as they ride
To death, or — if the Fates provide —
To rescue and renown.

But 'midst the clatter and the cry,
Mark you the dray-team standing by,
Heads up, with sudden-flashing eye
And nostrils flaming wide.
They pull upon the tight-drawn reins,
Like prisoners against their chains —
Half turn — but the grim load remains
Their fine and fallen pride.

The cracking whip's sharp-stinging coil
Recalls them to their bitter toil.
On through the rough pave's grinding moil
They plod their heavy way.
Gone is the glory that was theirs.
Now no one knows, and no one cares,
Though kings, who ruled the thoroughfares,
May haul the common dray.

So was it ever with the brave
Who to the world their courage gave —
Or beast or man, or king or slave,
Forgotten are their deeds.
Or harness-yoke or diadem,
In equal-wise we bury them;
And yet — for these — one requiem:
The grand old fire steeds!

MARCH

A STINGING blast that bares the frozen streets,
Lean trees that shiver in its icy hold,
Dead lawns, thin spread with snow in wind-rent
sheets,
No sun, no sky, gray worlds of sullen cold.

THE QUEST OF JUNE

SPORTSMAN Spring romps o'er the heather,
Song alilt and love a-tether;
Making young the forests olden,
Making meadows marigolden,
Kindling Earth anear, afar,
Into blossoming and singing,
Flowers from his footway springing
Like the sparks that lace the sandals of a
star.

Maiden June dreams by the river,
Hair adrift and heart a-quiver,
Lips more sweet than Amaryllis'
Wasted upon daffodillies,
Does she guess who cometh nigh,
As she listens to the crooning
Of the things o' wings a-nooning
In a world all blue of violets and sky?

Sportsman Spring no roebuck follows
Up the hills and down the hollows;
Not for pigeon, nor for plover,
Beats he through the brushwood cover;
Woman is his quarry fair,
Whom proud Mother Winter, dying,
Bade him seek with footsteps flying,
E'er he kissed the last pale snowdrops from
her hair.

Hunter, 'ware the witching willows,
Where the sunbeams strew her pillows,
Marking 'neath a cloud of tresses
All her thousand lovelinesses —

When she waketh, thou shalt swoon!
"Nay, 'tis Death," cries he, "I cherish!
Happy hunter, I, who perish
In the first, wild, wakening, rose-lipped
kiss of June!"

IF JUNE WERE MINE

If June were mine, I'd weave for you —
Of roses red and skies of blue,
Of golden sun and orchard sheen,
Of blossom-fretted damascene —
A veil of every petal-hue;

And from the morning mists of dew
Distil a fairy stream, that through
The woods should wend a way serene,
If June were mine.

And, e'er the purple dusk anew
The curtains of the sunset drew,
Adown the river's dream demesne
I'd paint a path incarnadine,
And drift into the dawn with you,
If June were mine.

WAS IT IN JUNE?

Was it in June that first we dreamed
Still in the garden's evening glow,
And watched the red cloud-pennons blow
Where Sunset's seaward galleons gleamed?
Was it in June my Heaven seemed
Only the kingdom of your eyes,
And Earth with all Love's guerdon teemed —
Was it in June — or Paradise?

Was it in June — that summer day,
When riverward, through filmy sheen
Of woodlands warm with early green,
We took the blossom-haunted way,
Like blithesome nymph and lissome fay,
And, drifting, in that sweet surmise
So yesfully you said me nay?
Aye, it was June — *and* Paradise!

JESUS UNTO MARY

ON THE TENTH CHRISTMAS

"Why came the angels, Mother dear,
Upon the night when I was born?"
"Perchance sweet Heaven was forlorn,
Thou being here."
"And were they beautiful to see?
Say o'er the tale the shepherds told."
"Ay, they were robed in shining gold;
They sang of thee."
"And was not that a wondrous thing —
That holy choirs cried my birth?"
"Nay; to all mothers of the Earth
Bright angels sing."
"But yet, thou sayest, from the skies
Strange fires wreathed my brow with gold."
"Yea, miracles are manifold
To mother-eyes."
"When I within a manger lay,
Why came great kings from distant lands?"
"They did but kiss thy baby hands,
Upon their way."
"Didst thou not tell me that a star
Shone on their path with wondrous light?"
"O little son, 'tis late; — good night —
Dreams bear thee far."

"O Mother, there is in my heart
A dream I may not understand."
"Sleep; thou shalt roam in Samarcand,
And Sidon's mart."

"Nay, I shall hear the Heavens call:
'O Son of God! Go forth! Redeem!'"
"My son, that is indeed a dream
Most strange of all."

"They call me, Mother, when I sleep,
Or when I wake, or when I play."
("God, give me but another day
My boy to keep.")

"What say'st thou, Mother? Must I fare
Alone into the darkness? I?"
("He is so little, God,— I cry! —
Earth's woe to bear!")

"Yea, I must follow; even now
The angel voices speak my name."
("Again, I see, the holy flame
Doth gird his brow!")

"Yet, Mother, I am sore afraid;
Oh, let me bide a little while."
"Whom God hath called for earthly trial,
His course is laid."

"Mother, I see an angry throng;
The face of Death upon me stares."
"I give thee to the God who cares
For weak and strong."

"I go,— and yet, within my heart,
The wholly human hunger cries."
"Sweet, those who meet in Paradise
Shall never part."

CHRISTMAS EVE

To-NIGHT is all the year to me,
When, out of all the ripened days,
Sorrow is sifted, Beauty stays,—
The winnowed grain of Memory.

Here all the months their emblems strew:
For April, there is Youth's delight;
For May, there are these blossoms bright;
For all Spring's love-time, there is You!

The Yule-tide flame snaps blithe below;
Bright holly berries burn above;
And Fancy builds a dream thereof —
A dream of Summer —'mid the snow.

For Autumn, there is harvest hoard
Of all the toiling world's good will;
For Winter, there's the wondrous thrill
Of laughter round the laden board.

Methinks to-night my happy heart
Rides, like the Wise Men, from afar,
Back through the ages, with a star
For certain guide and errless chart; —

Back through the ages, unto Them
Who in the lowly manger lay,
Where stolid kine soft watched by day
Above the Babe of Bethlehem.

And all the hope — the joy — that He
Gave to all Christmas-tides of Time
Lifts here a pinnacle sublime.—
To-night is all of Life to me!

FOR HOLIDAYS

HERE'S a song for holidays,
Holidays are here —
Christmas breathes through all our ways,
Merry Christmas cheer!
Throw aside the chains of toil,
Sorrow fling afar.
Lo! Athwart the world's turmoil
Shines the Christmas star!

Here's a song for holidays,
Weary hearts, look high;
See the tokened holly blaze,
Hear the joy bells ply.
Here's a song to love and mirth
That no tear may mar.
See! Above the joyous earth
Shines the Christmas star!

CHRISTMAS

OH, sweeter than the wondrous tale
Men tell of holy Bethlehem,
And prouder than the love of them
Who worshiped at the manger's pale;

Grandeur than Mary's mother thrill
Above the nest where Jesus lay,
Throbs through each human heart today
The message of a world's good will!

From northlands of the endless night
To shores of the resounding Horn
Men whisper: "Christ the Lord is born —
"My hate shall be my love tonight."

From East to West, by land and sea —
The circle of the whirling sphere —
The hearts of living things draw near —
Proud heart of you — rough heart of me.

Oh, magic of the holy dawn,
Oh, mystery of Christmas joy
That makes the Prince of high employ
Brother of Fortune's luckless pawn.

To farers of the sea you come;
The watch upon his canvas height
Breathes through the flush of morning light;
"It's Christmas, with the kids at home."

To exiled men, or near or far,
You bring today the season's cheer,
New courage for the dawning year —
The guidance of the Christmas star.

Stranger than human souls that fill
With gentle thoughts athwart the strife,
Deeper than truths of death and life —
It's Christmas — with a world's good will!

THE NORTHMAN'S CHRISTMAS TALE

In southward lands, where, holly bright,
Glow happy hearths at Christmas-tide,
I've watched deep in the starry night
The warm snows wrap my countryside;
In tropic climes all summerwise
I've seen Yule roses twine the pale,
But once I saw the Christ Child rise,
With dawn, on an Alaskan trail.

Blue-cold the northnight walled us round,
Lost exiles from all human kind;
The fagots flared with sputtering sound,
And in his sleep a sledge dog whined.
Eight weeks from somewhere in the snows,
Eight weeks beyond the call of man,
I lay that night, where, Heaven knows —
Some place 'twixt Skagway and Spokane.

I lay that night beside the flame;
I slept; men tell me that I dreamed.
But, Mary Mother, by thy name!
I saw Him when the dawnlight gleamed.
I saw Him in His baby gown
Stooping to warm Him o'er the blaze —
And since that night I've knelt me down
And prayed upon my Christmas days.

Shivered the little one, and crept
Cuddling beside me with a cry.
I wrapt him warmly, till He slept —
The Christ Child slept — and so did I.
The wind howled through the leaden night,
Out of the dark the wolf-yelp rang,
But in my dream a Star shone bright,
And o'er a manger angels sang.

Sunless the dawn slid into day.
I wakened to a world new born;
And lo! the smiling Baby lay
Beneath my furs — on Christmas morn!
O blessed Heaven, pity those
Whose Savior is a thing to dread;
I pity them as one who knows
The Christ that shared a trapper's bed.

To east and west and southward far,
In wildering ways my paths have lain.
My life hath known no holy star,
No churchly guide, no sacred fane;
But, under bright or barren skies,
On Christmas Eve I tell my tale,
For once I saw the Christ Child rise,
With dawn, on an Alaskan trail.

THE REAPER

To Earth's cold wounds, in the still Winter's
night,
God gave the balmy blessing of the snow.
Day dawned on calm, clear seas of fleckless
white,
A measureless delight,
Where waves of carven marble seemed to flow;
Then living things awoke and brought the
blight
Of the old cruel sears that lurked below.

O'er life's hard way where swift my feet had
trod,
Love, though belated, spread her tender veil,
A moment's space made monarch of the clod,
A sceptre of the rod;
To Life's new dawn my merry heart cried
Hail!
But in the noontide of my joy — O God,
The old sins mocked me from beyond the pale.

FOR THE SAKE OF A SONG

I AM done with the battle of life to-day,
The cry of the losing soul,
I am freed of the curse of my mortal clay
And I sing from a lyric scroll.

Oh, what care I, though Earth be sad,
Though wanton worlds go wrong!
My dream within is summer-clad
And my lips are sweet with song.

Through far and summery vales I wend,
By sleeping streamlet's brim,
Where the silver ripples blink and blend
And shadowed violets swim.

There is life and love in the boughs above,
And the waving grasses low;
There is swing of song in the drone of dove,
Where the wind-rocked tree-tops flow.

And I yield my soul in a lilting lay
To the Goddess of all things fair;
No joy but the joy of the song I pray,
And the song shall be my prayer.

THE DEATH SONG OF SHELIM

"... and they lashed him to the mast of a fisher's boat and turned its prow toward the sea ... and as he sailed he called upon strange gods."—HUDABON'S DAUGHTER.

IN flames the rearward waters wind,
Night-world and sea reach far before;
In deeps where starry gems are mined
Cold mermen delve their treasure store;
And I have left my love behind
Forevermore.

To sea-girt chasms vaulted low
My guarding Fates shall bear me slain;
Grim reaches measureless with woe! —
Life were the summit of my pain.
Ah pity! that she ne'er may know
Where I am lain.

Chained Titan-like 'twixt sea and skies,
Who loved too proudly in my joy,
Ye gnomes of Ocean, take your prize
And send the storm blast to destroy;
Far toward the love light of her eyes
My soul convoy!

Ye nymphs that sail within the sea,
Ye siren voices of the wave,
Whose calls across the rocky lea
Lure stately ships to ocean grave,

Oh, lift your shining arms to me
And, dying, save!

Ye calmed waters 'neath the stars,
Soft airs that whisper in the sail,
Oh, raise the whirlwind o'er the bars
And make my triumph in your wail;
Gather the wrathful might of Mars
To drive the gale!

Kind Death! How merrily I die!
I see the sailing cloud-rack fill,
The winds from out their caverns cry,
The rising waters claim their kill,
The stars have faded from the sky;
My soul is still.

Guideless my helm obeys the tide,
The storm-god stoops to crush my shell;
Wave-rent o'er crested seas we ride,
And eery mermen chime my knell;
Sweet Love, I yield me in my pride!
Fair one, farewell!

DAWN

A THRILL of prescience o'er the heart of Night,
Sift star-mist fading to an eastward glow,
Where cloudy argosies in guarding flow
Reach their gaunt spurs into the spreading
light;

A fleck of orange in the folded white;
A golden shadow on an argent ground;
Silence that shudders on the verge of sound;
Where Day's great mother travails in her might,

Awed in the natal agony of Earth,
As thou didst mark God's wonder in the skies,
Methought, O woman of immortal worth,
Methought I viewed another planet's rise;
Ay, gentle maid, a fairer, dearer birth
Gives dawn-light in the rapture of thine eyes.

THE EVENING GLOW

THE glooming sky is dark with winter rain;
The sun slunk low behind the cliffs of night;
But, long and lustrous as a golden chain,
Westward aloft one slender cloud is bright.

My little day is fading toward the dark;
Men say old age is shadow-hung with woe;
Yet upward oft, athwart the soul's dim arc,
Old memories gild the clouds in sunset glow.

WORTH WHILE

SUCCESS — there's just enough of it
To make you long for more.
Joy — you have caught the scruff of it,
And lo! it's left your door.

Love — there is not too much of it
In life's enlightened mile.
Hope — ah, the magic touch of it
That makes the world worth while!

MY LADY OF DESPAIR

SHE comes when hope is high,
When pride is flaunting fair;
She comes I know not why,
My Lady of Despair.

She brings the drooping eye,
The burdened brow of care;
She brings the broken sigh —
My Lady of Despair.

She brings the mind's reply
Unto the heart's wild prayer.
One faithful friend have I —
My Lady of Despair.

THE HILLS OF HOPE

THE morning breaks upon the purple hills,
The flush of curtained skies incarnadine,
Whilst low the lurking fog the valley chills
Where the wrapt city gropes its ways unseen.

In the low places of my soul, Despair
Broods through the darkening fog-deeps of the
grave,
But bright and golden in the clearer air,
Upon the hills of hope, the sun is brave.

WHO HATH NOT FACED?

QUEER puppets in Life's little to and fro,
Huddling in hunger of companionship,
Blindly we go, because the others go,
From Birth's bright dawn to Death's autumnal grip.

But in the long, cold corridors of Night,
Wakened as by the grieving wind's wild moan,
Who hath not faced his soul's grim eremite
And learned how utterly he was alone?

LIFE'S DEAD

ALL about us, vast and passionate, life pulsates,
And Life's living live and die;
All amongst us, intermingled, lost and hidden,
Life's dead lie.

Where Life's living battle fiercest, Hope, all-daring,
All-undaunted, lights the fray;
But the dead — Life's dead — see not nor know
her glory —
Blind are they.

While Life's living grovel lowest, Love, almighty,
Fair, unshadowed, rears her throne;
But the dead — Life's dead — she moves not;
they forever
Toil alone.

Shrouded always in the darkness of Life's night time,
Starved and starving for Life's bread,
Ye, the hopeless, ye the loveless, the unlightened —
Ye — Life's dead!

A SHIP OF WIDOWS

"CARPATHIA"

SHE carries all the hope we know —
All that from Death to Life were given —
Where the Sea's Titan staggered, riven —
And yet she is a ship of woe.

Her tidings are our only good;
But from the travail and the terror,
The crime and cruelty of error,
She carries grief — and widowhood.

Where through wild seas she creeps her way,
What comfort now can be availing?
The lingering night is filled with wailing,
And tears bedim the endless day.

She comes! — in Mercy's majesty!
Hailed by a watching world's ovation;
But what to them is life's salvation,
Who saw their sons and husbands die?

Who from the arms of hero men,
In Death's commanding presence, parted?
The living are the broken-hearted:
The dead in glory rest again.

Oh, let us meet in tender wise
The coming of the Ship of Sorrow!
Oh, let us bear to them to-morrow
The gifts of heart and sacrifice!

From all their boons of earth bereft,
Their woe will reach the wide world over,
And many a far, poor cabin cover
The tears of loved ones who are left.

Give! — in the gentle name of Love! —
The human love that e'er shall quicken
Between the strong heart and the stricken —
Give! — to the grief ye know not of!

1912.

THE WANDERER

"STAY, stay! for the earth is yours," they cry,
"And fortune smiles for you,
If ye will but wait for the prize that fate
Will surely lead you to;

"If ye will but grip at a brother's hand,
And hold to the humble way,
If ye will but toil in the common soil,
For the joy of a future day."

"Go, go! for the world is wide," you call,
"Oh, wanderer's heart of mine,
And ye must drain to its dregs of pain
The cup of the living wine.

"And ye must traverse the living zones,
From the north to the southmost key,
And read the chart of the human heart,
As east or west ye flee."

"Stay, stay! for our hearts are young," she
begs,
And her sorry tears fall fast;
"I'd love you well, if you would but dwell
In my longing arms at last."

But never a lure of earth shall hold
The throb of the Arab breast.

I'll love for a day, then swift away;
My rest but the wild wind's rest.

The gifts that the steadfast toilers win,
The loved heart's yearning cry —
I cast them far, for an empty star,—
Kind God, I wonder why!

THE BALM OF YEARS

YOUTH sets her eager eyes on one fair star
And battles upward with a single aim,
Indrawn by the vast magnet-wheel of Fame
That grasps and holds afar.

Youth yields her all to win the priceless meed
Of honor and of power and of praise;
Nor doubt nor shadow dims her hopeful days.
Hope is Youth's god and creed.

Youth blooms and blows and passes as the
spring,
Her castles crumble and her dreams are naught;
And failure clouds the glory dearly sought.
This Time and Knowledge bring.

And Manhood lifts to Heaven the calmer brow,
Beholds the fading star with tearless smiles,
Looks backward now down Time's returnless
miles,
Backward and inward now.

REPRIEVE

LAST night my life began!
In one swift moment's span,
As wrath of Ocean riotous and wild,
There came to me the soul-storm and de-
spair,—

There came the revelation, brutal, bare,
Of Passion victor over Truth reviled.

Wild-eyed I leant before
The kindly-open door
That led through beauteous ways I knew not
where;
I only knew the passion-cry within,
I only saw the silken robes of sin,
I only read the moment's glory there.

Poised for the fated flight,
Yet came one gleam of light,
And Life's full page stood graven in that space;
Withholding with a magic might my way,
There smiled on me a vision of new day,—
The vision of a fair, pure woman's face.

RETURNING

MEN marveled at his courage in the fight,—
How manfully Fate's buffetings he bore.
They saw not his homecoming in the night —
The smile of welcome at the opened door.

Men marveled that of joy his life was bare;
Smiled on of Fortune, still he dwelt apart.
They saw not when he climbed the darkened
stair
And closed the door upon his lonely heart.

WHO CARES?

Who cares?
He's made his mark in life,
A winner in the doubtful game,
And people crave his pocketknife
As something of a key to fame.
He's rich, and through his shining hall
The throng of fête and feasting fares,
But can you tell me, after all,
Who cares?

Who cares?
The friends whom once he held
Dearer than all ambition's store
Are scattered where, by greed impelled,
He tossed them in his lust for "more."
His name is on the lips of men,
But when he climbs the lonely stairs
After the day is done — say, then —
Who cares?

CAROL

Brown little bird of the tree,
Full of the thrill of the Spring,
Tell me the meaning of me,
You and of everything?

Withered old man at the pane,
This is the answer I bring:
Whether in sunshine or rain,
Fashioned were we but to sing.

SISTERHOOD

He never knew a mother. It was I
Whose arms he reached for, waking, shadow-
scared,
By vague child terrors that I all but shared.
Mine were the nights of travail, when his cry
Moaned low with pain, or fever-wild and high;
Mine were the love songs that he learned to
know,
Mine all his mother-watching to bestow
With little pleasures that my purse could buy.
He never knew a mother. All his life
To me he brought his honors and his woes;
He has but crowned his manhood — and he
goes
Unto this other woman — to his wife!
Ah, God, forgive me! these are loving tears;
And I have wept so little through the years.

THE FLEET

GAUNT rocks of death that darkly lay,
Unstirred by tide or river's sway,
Against the glory of the day

The ships of war were still.
Kindred in color to the wave,
Kindred in menace to the grave,
They floated, terrible and brave,
Beneath the peopled hill.

Immovable as fortified isles —
Stern guns abristle from their piles —
The anchored squadrons marked the miles
From bay to city's rim.
We gazed upon the steely chain —
The shackles of the mighty main —
Built, by our will, for human pain,
And felt the grandeur grim.

But sudden fell the veil of night,
And sudden to the wondering sight,
From far-thronged wave, and wall and height,
We saw the splendor glow.
Phantasmal as a magic dream,
The bosom of the hidden stream
Burst, beautiful, into the gleam
Of lights, long filed and low.

The floating citadels of death,
As by some mystic shibboleth,

Were fashioned, in the space of breath,
Into a fairy scene.
The things that men had made to kill
Stood glorified and sweet and still,
While music reached the shoreward hill
From out the dream-demesne.

But yet again the dawn came, cold.
The deep guns, by their thunder, told
Their power, where the echoes rolled
Against the rocky shore.
And out upon the ocean gray,
Trim, terrible, in close array,
The dreamful, deathful ships away
Went forth for Peace, or War.

FOR THE DEAD AIRMEN

Arch Hoxsey and John B. Moisant, who met death
in flight on December 31, 1910.

WIND of the West, blow soft
Upon their graves,
Who, living, loved aloft
Thine airy waves.

Wind of the South, thy tears
To bathe the flowers
That deck thy brothers' biers —
Ay, thine and ours.

Wind of the East, who bear
The breath of doom,
Bless with a gentler air
The laurelled tomb.

Wind of the North, arise!
Let tempests 'round
The circle of the skies
Their saga sound!

Birds of the air, oh, sing
Thy song for them!
The music of the wing
Their requiem.

A MESSAGE FROM MAGDALEN

EASTER-TIDE REMEMBRANCE

YE have decked ye for the feast-day, maid and
mother through the nations,
Ye have bowed ye at your altars, pure and
bountifully fair,
Ye have wept the Day of Sorrow, ye have joined
the jubilations
For the olden, wondrous story and the prom-
ise that was there.

Ye have dreamed the glory breaking through
the grave's returnless slumbers,
Ye have dreamed the tomb-gates sundered in
the rising of their dead;
Ye have dreamed of Mary, weeping, low beneath
the choiring numbers,
Mary Magdalene, low weeping, and the an-
gels overhead.

Priest and prophet, they have told ye of the
lesson and the learning,
Ye have read the marvel meaning from the
world-life to the new;
But the woman by the tomb-side, from your
purer vision spurning —
Ah, ye read but in the little, nor have turned
the pages through.

'Twas not one of ye who worshiped at the shrine-
side on the hour,

'Twas not one of ye beheld Him glorified from
out the grave;

It was but a maiden lonely, blighted in the vir-
gin flower,

Scorned from all the world ye honor, lost,
whom only He might save.

Think ye not there is a message from the out-
cast through the ages?

Think ye not that other Marys claim your
tenderness to-day?

Read ye not the law enduring blazoned on the
living pages,

That the fallen and the failing yet shall find
the upward way?

Ye have decked ye for the feast-day, maid and
mother through the nations,

Ye have bowed ye at your altars, pure and
bountifully fair,

Ye have wept the Day of Sorrow, ye have
joined the jubilations.

Ye have spurned the law of mercy and the
promise that was there.

THE SONG OF ODENATHUS

EDESSA smiles upon the plain

And Gaza looks unto the sea,

Where kingly cities count my gain

From Onne to Persian Sinope.

Fair maids are mine 'neath Sidon's walls,

More lovely than the holy sun,

And trophied treasure waits my halls

In Sapor's conquered Ctesiphon.

Yet still upon my tentless ride

To golden gates of Palmyrene

I seek my lady and my bride —

Zenobia, my promised queen.

Her eyes are darker than the Night,

Her soul is purer than the Day,

(On, gallant steed, in this, our flight,

As thou hast borne me in the fray!)

Her throne is shadowed by the palms

And purple hills of Syria,

Where monarchs lay their subject alms

Of Tarsus and of Tyria.

No craven blood of regal vein

Hath washed me in its lifeless flow;

I claim her by my sword and rein,

By desert march and battle-throe.

Lo! Where her gilded towers rise!
What pomp the trooping courtiers bring!
'Tis she! Now, in my empress' eyes,
God grant me worthy to be king!

THE GNOME OF THE SEA

Out of the centre-deep, blundering, thundering,
Wallow the lightning-lit floods of the sea;
Fierce through the forest-tops, plundering,
sundering,
Night-wind and storm-wind come calling for
me.

Age-long the life-lust slow mouldering, smouldering,
Feed I with souls of the lost of the sea;
Hard by the breaker-ledge, bouldering, shouldering,
Wild run the waters that bear them to me.

Boom of the signal guns, vying, replying,
Dull through the cavernous roar of the sea;
Shrieks of the doomed and the dying, far-crying,
Ride on the wings of the tempest to me.

Deep in my cavern-hold, moaningly, droningly,
Croon I the curse of the lost of the sea;
Close by the pine-flare, intoningly, groaningly,
Count I the souls that are given to me.

Back to the centre-deep, swallowing, hollowing,
Calm in the dawn-light returneth the sea;
Back to the center-deep, wallowing, following,
Sink the cold dead, but their souls are with
me.

THE CHEATING OF THE SEA

*Hell-born or holy-wisher;
Nervy or weak o' knee —
There's never a Georges fisher
That ever shall cheat the Sea.*

A gale off Georges blowin'
Hard, with a drive of snow;
Trouble out there, I'm knowin',
Where never again I go.
Never again the smother
Of the mast-high billows' foam;
I'm beached by the hearth with mother
And Tommy's letters home.

Grizzled with work and weather,
(Strange how a man grows old!)
We sit at the hearth together,
Away from the wind and the cold;
And over and over and over
She reads his yarns to me,
That were wrote by my Tommy rover
To his old Dad o' the sea.

Tonight (God help the fellows
That drift on the roarin' shoals
Out there, where the snowstorm bellows
With a cold to freeze men's souls!)

Tonight, with his books and knowledge,
And his boy eyes blazin' bright —
Yes, Tommy'll be home from college
To see his Dad, tonight!

Yell on, old Sea, I've beat you;
Yell till your killing's done!
I swore to my God I'd cheat you
Of my lad's life — and won!
Forty odd years you tried it
But you never have drowned me,
Whiles I saved my pay and plied it
To keep Tom off the sea.

I've won the fight, old Ocean!
— What's that? A gun? In shore?
Again! No, what a notion! —
Why, it's Tommy at the door!
Hello, my boy! Ho, Mother!
He's here! But steady, lad —
Come with you? Why, what other
Are you lookin' for but Dad?

Shipwreck? Guns to the nor'ard?
Why, God, yes, we must go;
Ay, I see her, reelin' shore'ard;
Don't, Mother, grip me so.
I'll bring you back your darlin'
As I've brought him back afore.

Come, boy — them rocks is snarlin'
And she's awful close ashore.

Tommy, we're goin' under;
Pull hard to the last, my boy.
Ay, now you rollers, thunder!
And scream your hellish joy!
I lose the fight; you win it,
But you taught me how to die.
Tommy, your hand a minute —
That's all, my boy — Good-bye.

*Hell-born or holy-wisher,
Nervy or weak o' knee,
There's never a Georges fisher
That ever shall cheat the Sea.*

THE STORM WRAITH

He sails when the moon is round, is round,
And he saileth not alone;
For all unshrined, with cold arms twined,
The dead rise out of the sea behind,
And follow the way unknown.

He sails when the waves are still, are still,
In the calm of the night's pale moon;
And woe to the ship that hath heard the 'drip
Of the shimmering oars in his ghostly grip
As he rides in the stripe of the moon.

He sails when the waves are still, are still,
When the breath of the night is warm;
But close and black in his shadowy track,
He leads the rush of the gleaming rack,
He bringeth death and storm.

He sails when the moon is round, is round,
And he saileth not alone;
For all unshrined, with cold arms twined,
The dead ride out of the sea behind,
And follow the way unknown.

THE GHOSTS OF THE SEA

In shadowy white,
Through the lonely night
And the fog-dimmed light
Of the North sail we;
And we hear the doom
Of an ocean tomb
When our pale spars loom
To the ships of the sea,

We tower high
To the leaden sky,
And low we lie
Where the black deeps be.
From the Polar star,
Where the night-days are,
We travel far
To the man-tracked sea.

And the Man's whole need
Is the joy of greed,
And the spur of speed
For a paltry fee;
And he dares to meet
(For the gold is sweet)
The deadly fleet
Of the Ghosts of the Sea.

Nor buoy nor bell
We have to tell,

Yet warn him well
How near we be,
For the chill of our breath
Far speaks of death;
"Beware," it saith,
"Of the Ghosts of the Sea."

But still in the night,
With their gleaming light,
The man-ships' flight
Runs fast and free
Till they strike the way
Where the ice-rocks slay,
And, dying, pay
The toll of the sea.

And the proudest prize
Of the Man's devise
In the lost deep lies;
Yet the time shall be
When the sons of Greed,
Who have done the deed,
Will hear and heed
The Ghosts of the Sea.

CHINA

THE rock is cleft; the ancient fossil stirs;
The sinews of the glory of the Past,
Entombed for ages in the stony cast,
Thrill into life. The splendor that was hers
When waning Rome sent suppliant arbiters
And the known world trembled before her
 sway
Renascent glows upon a new Cathay.

Out of the dark and silence of the tomb
A voice that sings a land's nativity;
A light that gleams across the land and sea
From out the sepulchre's age-fetid gloom;
A voice that thunders of the despot's doom;
A light of youth and of awakening
Flames on the far pagodas of Peking.

The clank of spurs, the bugle's battle call,
Break the dull slumber of a thousand years,
As when great Cheng against the Tartar
 spears
Led conquering legions, ere the wondrous Wall
Rose in its fearful grandeur to appall
The nomad foe. But arms now blazing
 bright
Mark not a monarch's, but a people's might.

The long-slaved cities quicken into life —
Life that is born of terror and of death,—

Death grim, yet hallowed by the shibboleth
Of Liberty, that glorifies the strife.
A healing virtue in the rending knife,
A song of Freedom in the cannon's roar;
The Sun of Peace beyond the clouds of War.
1911.

THE CALL TO ARMS

THE bugle calls from fortress walls
Where Danube's waters shine;
The banners fling their challenging
From Volga to the Rhine.
Tiber and Thames their diadems
Turn fretful toward Islam,—
But bloody though her waters glow,
The Bosphorus lies calm.

From camp and coast the Teuton host
Is summoned to prepare;
O'er hurried miles, in Cossack files,
Comes, ravening, the Bear.
With bristling guns the war-fleet runs
From Budapest's gray piles,—
While, stricken dread, yet respited,
The Turk looks on and smiles.

Ay, ride ye forth from West and North,
Czar, Emperor and King!
Ay, nobly ride in battle pride
And silent threatening,
In blood to sate the ancient hate
And plunge a world in wars,—
By brothers' death to give new breath
To Moslem conquerors!

What boots your vow for friendship now —
Your sacred pledge of peace,

[112]

When southward lies a golden prize
Your coffers to increase?
The gluttoned boar still fights for more —
Take lesson of the brute!
Ride on, ye kings! The clarion rings! —
The smiling Turk is mute.

1913.

[113]

THE SUNLIGHT ON THE SWORD

WHAT! Shall we ever in sorrow sing?
Say! Shall we know but the lost and lorn,
Hear but the dirge's cymbaling
In the marching drum and the merry horn?
Roses of glory crown the thorn;
Still in the brave heart Love is lord!
What of the heroes battle-worn?
What of the sunlight on the sword?

Count ye only the ghastly Thing —
Ashen city and gun-mown corn?
God! In Belgium reigns a KING!
These be MEN in the trenches torn!
Eagle-brood or the Lion-born;
Proud be the women who wait and ward!
(Love was ever to valor sworn.)
What of the sunlight on the sword?

Out of the Winter blooms the Spring;
Out of the darkness glows the morn;
Even a weary world shall ring
With deeds that even the dead adorn.
How! Shall we see but the shot and shorn,
Here in our manhood's might outpoured?
Warthe calls to the fortified Orne:
"What of the sunlight on the sword?"

Over the Thor-rack ride the Norn,
Hailing the heroes' ghostly horde.
Say! Shall their splendor march to scorn?
What of the sunlight on the sword?

December 23, 1914.

POEMS OF CHILDHOOD

THE CRIME OF BEING BOYS

Written after visiting the Children's Court.

HERE is a picture of sinner
Caught in the net of law;
Look at the brazen grinner,—
Hard eye and wicked jaw!
What? They don't *look* addicted
To anything worse than joys?
Why, man, they stand *convicted*
Of the crimes of being boys!

Ninescore and ten of 'em here, sir
(Harvest of holidays);
Never heard anything fiercer,—
Look at their evil ways!
Bright? And their collars aren't wilty?
Clean little bunch, all in all?
Why *twenty-five* are guilty
Of the crime of playing ball!

This is in Children's Court, sir —
Terrible crowd to-day.
Hark to that little sport, sir:
"There ain't no place to play."
What does he think he's here for,
Sassing the Judge like that?
Ought to be jailed a year, for
They caught him at the bat!

What'll become of the city
When kids are as bold as this?
Asking playgrounds and pity!
Plain cheek, that's what it is.
Hundred and ninety of 'em
(Shameful to hear it sung!)
And hanging forever above 'em
The crime of being young!

SOME FRIENDS OF OURS

A song for the days we used to know,
When I was a kid and you
Were a fluff of curls in a gorgeous bow
In a world of pink and blue.

A song for the babes we used to be
And the vows we made to hold,
When life built high for you and me
Its storied hopes of gold.

A song for the dreams we used to tell,
Through eyes of the old days seen,
When I was the King of the Painted Shell
And you were its charming Queen.

A song for the boys and girls we knew
In the realms of long ago;
The romps and the joys, and the sorrows too,
That met us in their flow.

A song for the world of you and me
And the friends now scattered far;
A song for the babes that used to be,
And a toast to the babes that are!

THE HOUSE OF BABIES

"Max Dick, landlord of the tenement house at Nos. 69-73 Rivington Street, known as the 'House of Babies,' where there are already 250 children, has offered a \$100 prize for the first baby to be born there after July 18."

— NEWS ITEM.

In a dark and dingy street,
Where the galling Summer's heat
Burns the small, unstockinged feet,
 Stands the House of Babies.
You can tell it by the noise
Of its twelve-score girls and boys.
Fun with poverty alloys
 In the House of Babies.

Littlest fellow, newly come,
Frail and wonderful and dumb,
You are better off than some,
 In the House of Babies.
Wealth and pride, so high above,
You may hold but little of;
But there's laughter and there's love
 In the House of Babies.

"Children Not Allowed" we view
In the stately Avenue.
"Welcome, little stranger, you,"
 Says the House of Babies.

Here, where toil and trouble meet,
Still there's room for baby feet.
Heaven bless the dingy street;
 Bless the House of Babies!

July 21, 1909.

CHILD'S PLAY

"Children four years old work in canneries sixteen hours a day," testifies an investigator. "Most of them work because it is play for them," say the canners.

BEFORE the sun's first beams alight
Upon your baby's pillow white,
Spinning with magic Heaven-old
Those tousled curls to threaded gold;
Long ere those sleepy eyes shall gleam
From out the fairyland of dream;
Before the cock-crow cleaves the air —
Afar the factory whistles blare
The night-birth of the toilers' day,
And call THEIR babies out — to play.

While smiling o'er the breakfast board,
Your little chatelaine or lord
Prattles of jolly plans to bless
A long glad day of nothingness,
Afar — though only at your door —
Where "industry's" proud engines roar,
THEIR babies, with weak, wounded hands
And heads that nod despite commands
And hearts that never shall be gay,
Bend slowly, sickly, to their — play.

Their playthings are the canning shears;
The engines rumble in their ears;
Their fairyland the misty gray
Of half-lit rooms that breed dismay;

[124]

Their playmates, the grim, sullen men,
And women hard past human ken;
Yet none will stop their "merriment"
Till all their little strength be spent.
So, gentlemen, and this you say
Is — (yes, for Death it may be) — play!

[125]

AN OLD SWEETHEART OF YOURS

WHERE has she gone, I wonder —
 (Does any one ever know?)
With her cheeks as soft as the morning
 And her pig-tails tied with a bow?
Her grace was the grace of the angels —
 Let's see — what was her name —
That first little Wonder Lady
 Who kindled your heart aflame?

Remember the first day, don't you,
 When she tripped alone to the school?
When she passed you, a starched vision,
 And left you, a smitten fool;
How you blushed with joy when you found her
 Beside you in Class B 2,
And were snubbed when you tried to whisper,
 With a crushing "Who is you?"

But then, when you'd got acquainted,
 And your mother had called on hers
In that dear old small-town fashion,
 Where the soul of friendship stirs —
Ah, then, the thrill and the terror!
 The rapture and anger-flame!
When the boys jeered: "Tom and Gracie! —
 Aw, Gracie and Tommy — shame!"

Stern knight of a noble lady,
 You plunged in the cruel fray,
 [126]

While she, with a woman's courage,
 Intrepidly ran away —
To find you again next morning
 A-swing on her front yard gate,
Awaiting a bashful "Thank you"
 For bearing her book and slate.

Where has she gone, I wonder —
 (Where do they ever go?)
Why, into the magic country
 Of Memory's after-glow.
She dwells in your heart forever —
 Let's see — what was her name —
That first little Wonder Lady
 Who kindled your heart aflame?

UPON THE ROAD TO TEN

A SILVERN road 'neath summer skies
Winds through a land of dreams,
Where magic domes and towers rise,
All bathed in starry beams;
And paths that run within and out
Beyond all mortal ken
Lure on a long and lightsome route
Upon the road to ten.

The road is trod by childish feet,
All innocently pure,
When Life is new and Earth is sweet
And human faith is sure;
And we that once have passed the way
Shall find it ne'er again,
For Youth must revel while she may
Upon the road to ten.

Each step brings wealth of wider joy,
Ungessed of all before,
And garnered wonder waits employ
From souls that crave its store;
The tender travelers who ride,
They ask not why nor when;
They hold no privilege to bide
Upon the road to ten.

And we who innocently soared
So little while ago,

Where love and faith and fancy poured
Their bounties all afflow,
Must bind at last our sullen fate.
To plight and paths of men,
And close for e'er the visioned gate
Upon the road to ten.

TO PI YU

The baby Emperor of China, in whose name a constitutional government has been granted to the people.

Poor little royal baby,
Chief of the Manchü clan,
Sired of fearful Genghis
And splendid Kubla Khan,
Robed in the sacred garments
Of silk and silver and gold,
Ruling five hundred millions —
And only five years old.

Why are you glum, old fellow?
Do they keep you all alone
There in the holy palace,
Perched on a golden throne,
Hearing the mystic mumblings
Of those who bow before
Your tiny feet in the sandals
That cannot touch the floor?

Seeing the common children
As you ride in your guarded car,
Have you wondered why you are never
As happy as they are?
That sad little brow and the pouting
Of lips that ought to sing —
They tell us the whole sad story
Of being a baby king.

But, say, have you heard what's happened?
You haven't? Well, 'twas this way:
Good fairies came and carried
Your stupid old throne away!
And they made your people love you;
And when you've grown a man,
They will say that you reigned more nobly
Than Genghis or Kubla Khan.

A COURTIER'S SONG

THERE'S a royal lady who waits for me
In the twilight shade of a doorstep throne;
A daintier monarch ne'er ruled the free,
A fairer lady no land hath known.

I told her I loved her yester eve,
And she holds my promise since yester morn,
Pledged with a trophy I'll ne'er retrieve —
That I'd bring to My Lady a caramel horn.

In her vine-hung arbor she sits at ease,
In the dusk of the lingering, toiling day.
There's a little red princess across her knees —
A beautiful princess of painted clay.

There are dreams afar in My Lady's eyes,
As she leans her chin in her tiny hands,
And her golden curls droop pensive-wise
'Round the little red princess, who under-
stands.

The courtiers are fled from her silent halls,
And the ladies-in-waiting have left their play.
But see! From the throne-top the princess
falls!
And the sovereign lady is running away!

She is flying to me up the quiet street.
(The beautiful princess lies forlorn.)

In a leap and a glorious kiss we meet,
And she asks me: "Where is my caramel
horn?"

The royal lady is off to bed;
She has left me alone in the firelit room;
The pleasures of caramel sweets are sped,
And the dying embers glow warm in gloom.

Tomorrow My Lady is six years old.
How quickly the morrows turn yesterdays!
Ere long a woman, and queen thrice told,
She will rule new worlds in new found ways.

Who knows how soon on her doorstep throne
She will wait for a king more loved than I,
When the heart of My Lady is larger grown,
And the little red princess is left to die?

He will bring her the world for an humble prize,
Her beauty with earth's best gifts adorn,
But he never shall find in her happy eyes
Such thanks as are mine for that caramel
horn.

TO SANTA CLAUS

TEN million baby hearts tonight,
Ten million little ones in prayer
Beseech your coming through the air,
O spirit of the Christmas night.

Ten million pairs of wakeful eyes
Watch for your form adown the hall,
And children's ears await the call
You fling the reindeer steed that flies.

Oh, ride you fast and make no pause;
Oh, be you kind and keen of sight;
No baby stocking pass tonight;
God bless you! merry Santa Claus!

TO HIS CHRISTMAS BROTHER

GEE! Yuh poor kid! Couldn't yuh *wait* awhile,
Instid o' bein' borned on Chrismus? Say!
If yuh jest knew wot day it wuz, yuh'd smile
Out'n the other side, yuh little jay!

Pa says yuh'r our bes' Chrismus present. Well,
Yuh'll soon fin' out it ain't no lot o' fun
Bein' a Chrismus present, w'en I tell
Yuh, kid, yuh'll never *git* a single one!

Bill Smith wuz borned on Chrismus, an' he ain't
Got no more birthday 'n a rabbit! Hear?
W'y, if I had his luck, I guess I'd faint.
He on'y gets one bunch o' toys a year!

If yuh wuz borned on May 12, like I wuz,
Yuh'd git a bat, or a beeg ball instid,
Jest w'en yuh needs 'em worst. Guess its becuz
Yuh look so easy 'at they bunked yuh, kid.

Yuh needn't think 'at yuh kin use *my* stuff
Jest cuz I'm sorry for you. 'Tain't my fault.
An', gee! *I* hardly never git enuff,
Onlest they comes a box from Uncle Walt.

I'll tell yuh somepin, though: Ma's sick to-day,
An' prob'ly she don' know yer here yet; well,
You better beat it, kid, an' keep away
Till June or some time. Naw! *I* wouldn't
tell!

THE PLOT AGAINST SANTA CLAUS

LITTLE Phil Kennedy, boasting longevity
Covering six rather serious years,
Got the idea that this Christmas Day levity
Wasn't as pleasant as sometimes appears.
Three sad Decembers he'd written to Santa
Well in advance and full-stating his needs.
"If he's a square one," said Phil, "then why
can't a
Good little boy get some toys an' some
feeds?"

Felt he had given the Saint opportunity
Well to make good and to prove he was real,
Firmly decided no further immunity
Was to be granted to such a mean deal,—
Out of the rags on the bed that he shared with
Three junior brothers as hapless as he,
Little Phil crawled in a gown that compared
with
Torn relic robes of 300 B. C.

Went to the stove, the home's only possession,
Boasting a "chimley," and sat himself down,
Shiv'ring, yet brave in his fearful obsession,
Waiting for Santa to "do him up brown";
Waited and waited, alone in the dark there,
Stern little hero, prepared for the fray.

Must have been midnight, when, suddenly —
hark, there! —

Sound of the bells of old Santa Claus' sleigh!

Phil to the window crept softly and gaspingly,
Peered out on walls of bleak tenements tall.
What was that vehicle creaking there rasp-
ingly? —

No, 'twasn't Santa — an ash cart, that's all.
Little Phil took up his guard again bravely,
Sleepy, but stern, by the cook-stove's cold
hearth.

Bells rang the midnight, some gladly, some
gravely,
Telling the world of the sweet Savior's birth.

What was the end of the plot of Phil Kennedy?
How did he vanquish old Santa that night?
No battle hymn can be made of this threnody —
Matter of fact, there was never a fight.
What happened? Nothing! Oh, Fate's bitter
mocking!

Little Phil slept, and the vigil was vain;
Woke in the dawn 'neath the same empty stock-
ing: —

Old Santa Claus had escaped him again.

HOME ALONE

EVERYBODY's gone away,
House is big an' dark an' still.
Ain't much for a kid to play
All alone, unless I kill
The canary with my gun —
Gee! but wouldn't that be fun!

Everybody's gone away,
Won't be back till supper time;
Don't see why I have to stay
In the house. I tell you, I'm
Sick of it. I'd like to bust
That big vase to shiny dust.

Everybody's gone away;
Wouldn't take me 'long, because
I was bad the other day
I was took to Mrs. Shaw's.
If I had that jar of jam,
Wonder how much I could cram.

Everybody's gone away;
Wish they never would come back.
When they do, I'll only say:
'Twasn't me — I didn't crack
The front window — it was done —
Anyhow, 'twas just for fun.

Everybody's gone away;
Yes, o' course I have been bad.
Wonder what my ma'll say
When she goes to tell my dad.
Wonder why I git this way
Every time they go away.

HUMOROUS VERSE

PERVERSTY

I BOUGHT her posies white and red,
At half-a-hundred per,
And sweetmeats of the best, I said,
Weren't sweet enough for her;
With dances, dinners, and the play,
In Fashion's utmost van,
She romped my precious coin away —
And thanked some other man.

I watched my substance dwindle by,
In autos, yachts, and toys,—
What matter though the price was high,
Expenses were my joys;
I followed her across the world,
And, as it seems to me,
She sat upon the deck and whirled
My silver to the sea.

And when the last absurdest cent
I'd buried in her view,
When fortunes five I'd gladly spent
And borrowed something too,
When, like a fool, without design
I told her all,— why, then —
She raised her smiling lips to mine
And made me rich again.

THE JILTING

A MONOLOGUE

I must refuse him — it is *too* absurd!

Ned really has no *right* to ask my hand!
He's been away a *year* — and what I've *heard*!
I'll simply have to *make* him understand.

I've kept a list: on fourteen different days,
In one short year, he didn't write at all;
And George has taken me to all the plays,
And Clarence to six dances and a ball.

But here's Ned's wireless: he will call at four;
Why four? I *know* that ship got in at noon.
I guess he doesn't care much any more;
I surely *hope* so. — Why, he *must* come soon!

Just like a man, to think a girl can stay
In love *forever*, while he has his lark.
I wonder if he'll like my hair this way —
Does he think I'll wait here for him till *dark*?

I want it over with. I'll simply state
That I have changed my mind; that is, of
course,
I never *really* promised; but of late
He's seemed to think it settled — by brute
force.

I'm just in grief to have to break his heart.

It's his own fault. Oh, no, we wouldn't
starve;

But Ned has not a *bit* of soul for art,
And I *suspect* he's never learned to *carve*!

Why, *there he is*! He just got off the car.
Now some one stopped him. Pooh, that
Gladys Pratt!

Of course, he's fickle — such men always are —
The *horrid, little, interfering cat*!

He's coming! Why, I didn't realize
How big — and — handsome — Ah, Ned,
so you're here —
How *dare* you? *Stop!* You took me by sur-
prise;

You thought I'd jilt? O Ned, how *could* you,
dear?

ON THE WAY HOME

"DIDN'T you like the party, dear, to-night?"
(Silence. She turns her head the other way.)
"What have I done? Isn't my tie on right?"
(No answer — but her eyes have things to say.)

"Is it because I danced with Mrs. Chatt?
Her husband made me, really." (She is dumb.)

"Surely you can't be jealous that I sat
Out with the silly Grimes girl?" (She is mum.)

"I know I talked too much of me and mine —
Was that the reason?" (Perfect stillness reigns.)

"But I was proud — you simply looked divine! —

Can't you forgive me?" (Speechless she remains.)

"Was it because I stumbled in that waltz?
I always do some fool thing." (Not a word.)

"I didn't mean to lose your smelling salts."
('Twould seem the protestations were unheard.)

"Oh, Mrs. Gad then told you that I said
Her dress should have the prize?" (Hark!
'Tis the wind.)

"Or was it that I cut Ned Killer dead?
He's a mere rake. Look at me, dear."
(She's blind.)

"Well, I confess I ought to be accursed
For talking shop at dinner." (She is mute.)
"I'm sorry that I used the wrong fork first."
(Her hush and nature's hush are absolute.)

"Oh, very well, then, since you're bound to sneer.

I can fight, too, if quarreling's such fun."

She speaks! She smiles! "Why, I'm not angry, dear,

I merely wished to know what you had done."

THE MARCH OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

THERE'S a flutter of white in the busy street;
There's a patter and trip of dainty feet;
The way is bright
With an airy flight,
And the strivers of earth in their sullen plight
Look on, and out of their hearts they say,
With a curse for the chains of the worker's fate,
Bitter and born in a new-found hate,
"I would give a life to be free to-day,"
— As the girls go by to the matinée.

There are faces fair in the sunny street;
There is laughter lightsome and low and sweet;
There's an air that sings
Of summery things
In the sweep and the swirl of gauzy wings,
As up and down, from near and away,
Ranked and filed in their gay brigade,
Marshaled fair for their dress parade
In the priceless moments before the play,
The girls go by to the matinée.

There are hearts that dance in the dusty street
With a tender, tremulous, merry beat;
There are thoughts that flee;
There are eyes that see
In a world that is closed to you and me.

Ah, who so happy a man to-day
As he, the handsome, the strong, the bold,
Lover and lord of the modern mold,
The leading man in the summer play,
Beloved of the girls at the matinée?

Alas! the marchers are few and fleet,
And the moments fly in the busy street;
There's a flurry of grace,
There's a twitter and race,
And again the world is the same old place,
Rude and ribald and dirty and gray.
The toilers turn to the old grim round,
But the curse they cry is of kindlier sound;
There is hope for all who have watched by the
way
As the girls go by to the matinée!

PERVERSITY

He liked her eyes;
He liked her hair;
He liked her independent air;
He liked the things
She liked to wear.

He liked the way
She laughed and kept
Her wits about her
When she wept;
He liked the way
She stood and stepped.

He liked her tastes
In books and fur;
He liked her voice,
Nor screech nor purr:—
He didn't care
A darn for HER.

THE SUMMER MAID RIDES FORTH

To arms! It is the tide of May!
To arms! The Spring's wild trumpets blare;
Ride forth the shining ranks today,
Ride forth the free, ride forth the fair.
O fendless hearts, beware! beware!
For June is calling at the door;
In dainty troop and debonair,
The summer maid rides forth to war!

Last night, the weary Season's sway
Fell with the embers' final flare.
She sent her Winter's loves away
With smiles adown the twilit stair;
Her thoughts to farther fields repair,
To mountain grove and golden shore.
In Cupid's van to do and dare,
The Summer maid rides forth to war!

With hoarded wealth of proud array,
In panoply both rich and rare,
She sallies to the waiting fray,
A winsome knight beyond compare.
The call of Earth is in the air;
The lures of Summer smile before.
Oh, may her heart, in pity, spare!—
The Summer maid who rides to war.

Ay, pity them that meet her snare,
But pity us poor wretches more,
Doomed here to bide the city's glare
When Summer maids ride forth to war.

WHAT'S THE ANSWER?

I SQUEEZED into a subway train
About the witching Shopper's Hour,
And all the women, might and main,
Were handing out the glassy glower.
They glared at one another's hats;
They sneered at one another's dresses;
Jabbed verbal hat-pins into "rats"
And other counterfeited tresses.

They murmured, "Isn't she a fright?"
They giggled, "*Will* you look at that one!"
"Say, listen, Mame, that girl's a *sight!*
Are them hips hern? — no, dear, the fat
one."

They scoffed in critical confab;
Not one but got the axe and hammer;
I never heard such gifts o' gab
Play havoc with the English grammar.

Into that car a babe was hauled
By an old person, plump and dowdy.
The babe he squalled, the babe he bawled —
He really was a perfect rowdy.
But presto! every visage grim
Beamed smiles upon the infant scrappy;
They cooed to him and "booed" to him:
He grinned — and every one was happy.

THE MAN WHO LOVES A JOKE

THOUGH his pedigree be painted
 'Scutcheonless of prince or peer,
Though he boast no kinship sainted
 Stretching stately in his rear,
Though his funds be slow and slender,
 'Like of clothes and coinage broke,
All my scruples I surrender
 To the man who loves a joke.

Mark I not his lore nor living,
 Count I not his tongue nor creed,
Sin and shadow all forgiving,
 Bow I gladly to his need;
Friends and fathers ranged before me,
 Clodded head and heart of oak,
I will give them all that bore me
 For one man who loves a joke.

Flaunt his banners fore or after,
 Count his battles lost or won,
Kindly connoisseur of laughter,
 Just philosopher of fun;
Lightlier shall beat the breaker,
 Lightlier rest the human yoke
On the happy co-partaker
 With the man who loves a joke.

Brother to the world around him,
 Fellow with the clod and clay,

High and low alike shall sound him
 For the comfort of their way;
Sharer of life's joy and sorrow,
 Bearer of the erring stroke,
Hopeful of the fairer morrow,
 Lives the man who loves a joke.

Clearer eyed and broader builded,
 Kindlier towards his human kind,
Vision keen nor fancy-gilded,
 Open heart with open mind,
Self esteeming, yet denying,
 Severed from the selfish cloak,
I will spend my life relying
 On the man who loves a joke.

IN THE AEROPLANIC AGE

With apologies to Langdon Smith, who wrote "Evolution."

WHEN I am a Martian and you are a bird
In the Aeroplanic Age,
I shall run by balloon 'neath the nose of the
Moon

To call at your starry cage.
We will sail by the lights of the sky's Broadway
('Twas the Milky Way of yore),
And for supper a dab of a Zodiac crab
When the heavenly play is o'er.

When the morning deepens the red of Mars,
Though we'll wake to a sordid toil
When they've emptied the purse of the Universe
In the coffers of Standard Oil,—
Still, just for the sake of our earthly past,
As the wheel of the ages swings,
I will loaf with you for an æon or two,
And enfold you within my wings.

From a planet apart I may call your heart
For a wireless, gay confab;
And the Superway of the stars, or say,
A Jupiter taxicab,
Shall carry us out by a five-cent route
To the Great Bear's Coney Isle;
And we'll both forget you're a Suffragette
And that germs in your kisses smile.

I will bring you the news by the lightning sent
From our old, old home, the World;
How, out of the map by the militant Jap
The rest of the earth was hurled;
Or maybe (but this I say in doubt,
Though centuries intervene)
They'll flash: "We're free from the B. R. T.
And the Subway air is clean!"

AS ALL OF THE FELLOWS DO

DRAINING Life's draught at twenty,
Filching the steps of Time,
Proud in a thoughtless plenty,
We toyed with the reins of crime;
Bound to an idol craven,
We quaffed of the Devil's brew,
And we left the mother-haven,
As all of the fellows do.

Yielding Life's dearest treasures,
Ours in the Maker's plan,
Hot in our hell-born pleasures,
We squandered our faith in man;
We sinned for the pride in the sinning,
For the joy in the wrong we knew,
And we ask how we made beginning?
Why, all of the fellows do.

We made our plunge with the others,
God knows we could not stay,—
Galled by the scorn that smothers
The thought of the better way;
We mocked at those who doubted
And we laughed with our brother crew;
"Come on! come on!" we shouted,
"See, all of the fellows do."

And now that we mark the turning,
When the reckless ride is done,
Crushed by a hard world's spurning,
With our godless glory won;
Long years e'er Death shall blind us,
When our days are yet but few,
We reap of the Youth behind us,
As all of the fellows do.

AN ALMANAC FOR CITY FOLKS

THE seasons come, the seasons go;
But how the deuce are we to know?
We see no "autumn-blazoned" trees,
(Because we have no trees, alas!)
No "taste of Spring" adorns *our* breeze;
And we've eliminated grass.
Yet why despair, for, true and clear,
The fruit stands tell the time of year.

O dainty Sue, come roam with me;
Strawberries say it's love-time; see!
They may be green, they may be high,
But ah, how eloquently sweet
They gaze while Pan and you and I
Stroll through the vales of Fulton Street,
Or walk, in Nature's wakening glow,
A-berrying along Park Row!

June passes; I'm assured it's true
By berries, huckle, black and blue;
Soon soft Italian accents teach,
On every corner that I turn,
The virtues of the early peach;
Soon red-ripe apples here will burn,
And Broadway's orchards loud declare:
"For Winter we must all pre-pear."

Thus, metropolitanly cute,
We read the almanac of fruit.
Grapes tell us that the Autumn wanes,
And in the orange's rich wine,
Athwart the chill of frosted panes,
Warm hearths and sparkling footlights
shine,
While, emblems of Life's endless pound,
Bananas keep eternal round.

THE OUTCAST

His friends — the ones who loved him best —

Have passed him up and pass him by,
And coldest scorn is his bequest

From those who used to hold him high.

With haunted steps and craven eye,
He threads the ways he trod of yore.

The reason! You've not heard it? Why,
He found grand opera a bore.

His lot no more is with the blest.

Ah! what a weight of crime must lie
Beneath the sunset of his vest!

Poor devil! But we all must die;

And those who chance to go awry
Must meet the punishment in store —

You can not help him though you try —
He found grand opera a bore.

Alas, but how should one have guessed

That such as he should so belie

Our confidence, and thus confessed,

Should hope with honest folk to vie!

Out with him! Heard you not his cry:

"The hero stutters?" Blood and gore!

The peace of heaven's saints 'twould try.
He found grand opera a bore.

L'ENVOI

O foolish, ill-starred sinner, fie!

No sympathy you need implore —
(Except from some such fool as I,
Who found grand opera a bore.)

ELEGY IN A LIT'RY CHURCHYARD

Now I see why poetry's decaying;
Now I know why fiction's on the blink.
Though the lit'ry crops are big and paying,
Hard times rule the realms of thought and
ink.
'Tisn't that the Age is money-dizzy;
Here's the reason for our sorry plight:
All our budding geniuses are busy
Writing books on how to write books right.

Lit'rychure is being too-much rescued;
Lit'rychure is being ultra-saved.
Could you gaze this moment on my desk you'd
Realize why authorship's depraved:
Forty books on "How to Write a Poem";
Sixty-two on "Fiction Taught at Night"!
Where the deuce am I to read or throw 'em —
All the books on how to write books right?

Think what these prolific educators
Could produce, if they but had the time!
They would doom the race of second-raters
If they'd write, instead of teaching, rhyme.
I might save the Age from lit'ry slumber,
And I *would* with generous delight,
If two "rules" agreed in all the number
Of these books on how to write books right.

BALLADE OF MODERN ROMANCE

OVER the page and away,
And the little new book is old,
Moments of pleasure and play
Closed in its covers of gold;
Passion and panoply rolled,
Only to wither and die;
All of your hours are told —
Good-by, little book, good-by.

"Best of the season," they say,
"One for all ages to hold."
"This is no tale of a day;
This is of different mold" —
No, little book, just paroled
Out of Oblivion's eye,
Daintiest covers must fold —
Good-by, little book, good-by.

Happy we've been, you and I,
Deep in your romance high-souled,
Sword clash and lovers' sweet sigh,
Hero and heroine bold;
Lo, as the pages unfold,
Only our parting draws nigh;
"Best of them all" in the cold —
Good-by, little book, good-by.

L'ENVOI

Ah, but let none of us scold.
Note your financial reply:
"Two million copies, all sold."
Good-by, little book, good-by.

A PLEA FOR UNKNOWN AUTHORS

YOUR authors will hunt for ages
The luring, elusive "right word";
Your poets will blacken pages
In search of the rhyme preferred;
Your scholars, your rhetoricians
Build books that run smoother than sleds;
But the champion word-magicians
Are the men who write newspaper heads.

If Shakespeare worked for our "Yellow,"
Where I hold a copy desk chair,
His trouble in writing "Othello"
With mine, sir, would never compare.
He'd write until through;— what's ab-
surder! —
But I'd have to crowd, at one swipe,
"Desdemona," "elopement" and "murder"
Into one foot of ten-inch type!

We're quarreling not with our labor;—
We're broken to harness, and tame;—
But if pen is still better than saber,
Then where in the deuce is our *fame*?
Now Dante, whose horrors cause wonder —
Why, you can't read him through in a day.
But look at the blood and the thunder
Which we, in a nutshell, display.

Your authors can write on forever;
Your poets need never say quit;
They ask: "Is it new?"—"Is it clever?"
But this is our test: "Will it fit?"
We'll ne'er shake Oblivion's fetters,
Though our "works" print in purples and
reds;
But, mind you, the real men of letters
Are the men who write newspaper heads.

THE LATEST FIEND

SOME people to arsenic run,
While others with opium gad;
There's many a poison, begun,
Will prove a delectable fad;
Thus morphin the gloomy makes glad,
Cocain is declared to be fine —
I've found a new way to the Bad —
The magazine habit is mine.

I buy them by hundreds and tons,
In covers ubiquitous clad,
And every old story that runs
Is driving me quietly mad;
There's not an unfortunate "ad"
Escapes my attention malign;
I read them from index to brad —
The magazine habit is mine.

Such simples as cocktails and rum
Are food for the veriest lad;
Those playthings in eons to come
Must fall to the cub and the cad;
The hungry, the hopeless and sad
Will dope on another design: —
Some centuries early I've had
This magazine habit of mine.

DeQuincey's confessional pad
Consumes me with laughter benign;
His battle was easy — Egad!
The magazine habit is mine!

A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Not, sir, for publication this wise verse
(Unless — by some mistake — you chance to
like it.)

I scorn by trickery to augment my purse.

This, sir, is confidential; read, then “spike
it.” *

But I *must* tell you that your jolly sheet

Fills me with grief, with pity. Each bright
column

Tells of a tragedy in your retreat —

Of sad young jokes that died, and jingles
solemn.

Nay, you mistake; my pity's not for you.

(If 'twere, you know, I wouldn't send you this
one.)

Think of us “struggling” brave young “au-
thors” who

Get frequent checks, of course — yet hate to
miss one.

Our work is fine. It's *always* “with regret”

That you (always) return it. Be a boomer!

Lots of our stuff is funny, now I'll bet,

That doesn't even show a sense of humor.

I'll bet each day, where'er it is you read

And calmly doom the clever stuff we send you,

* Stamped envelope enclosed.

You raise a howl over some simple screed
That brings your aides all running to defend
you.

I'll bet they gather round, with squeaks of joy,
To hear some would-be poet's joyous blunder.
You laugh! He meant you to, poor, luckless
boy!

Why don't you print it? That's what makes
me wonder.

My plea is for the fun that is not wit;

My faith is in the dullness that is funny —
Partly because you'd win great joy by it,

Mostly, I own, because I need the money.

Now, just to show I'm right, as well as game,

If I have moved your mind to newer workin's,
I'll let you print this — but don't use my name

(Unless you seem to need it) —

CHESTER FIRKINS.

BALLADE OF SISTER'S BRASS

MOTHER looks about in wonder;

Father stammers in amaze,
As their modern parlor plunder
Vanishes before their gaze;
Bric-à-brac of recent days,
Statues of the tinted classes,
Have to clear the mantel-ways —
Sister's going in for brasses.

Where grim portraits used to blunder,
Now on chastened walls we raise
Plaques and tablets dug from under
Butte's substrata — called Cathay's.
Candlesticks have won the bays
From electric lamps and gases;
Drippy grease and smoky haze! —
Sister's going in for brasses.

Sister's torn herself asunder
From her family; she strays
Through the streets of grime and thunder
Where on priceless junk she preys.
Sister, in her solemn craze,
Home from second-hand morasses
Brings us germs and tarnished trays —
Sister's going in for brasses.

ENVOY

Kinsfolk, wait until this phase
Of her soul's improvement passes;
Then we'll eat, and see some plays!—
Sister's going in for brasses.

[174]

THE ADVERTISING BABY

WHILST yet my fists were much too new to
knock,

Whilst yet my age was measured by the clock,
I recollect I yelled for Piper's Pills
And got them, though it caused a fearful shock.

Thus Fortune marked me at the very start
To be the future darling of her heart,
For Piper sent a check in twenty days
And said the baby must be deuced smart.

I've squalled for Piper now these eighteen years;
My pay is even better than my tears.

"I squall for Piper's Pills," the legend reads,
As in the magazines my face appears.

O parents, in these advertising days
Weep not because the baby weeps,— his ways
Are probably much wiser than you know,—
But let him wail for that which quickly pays.

Soap, biscuits, beer, and bon-bons with that ilk
Are quite the fashion; also Murphy's Milk
Is popular among the ads, I see.
There should be money in electric silk.

Some babies yell for cigarettes or ties,
And autos bring the teardrops to their eyes,
And one (but this is strictly on the side)
For Hirsute's Hair Restorer loudly cries.

[175]

Those ancient babes who clamored for the moon
Are out of date — their coming came too soon.

Utilitarian the Age is turned;
Our babies put some profit in their tune.

SHE READ MY PALM

SHE read my palm, and from her eyes
I would have sworn that she was wise.

"Fear not," said she, "though long you drop,
Some day you'll shine way at the top."

For weary years I toiled away;
I worked by night, I strove by day,—

Yet fame and wealth seemed just as far
Ahead of me as any star.

All else I bore, nor thought to grieve
Until my hair began to leave.

Oh! then I wept and cursed the day
That palmist maid had crossed my way.

When at the glass I chanced to stop —
Behold! I shone upon the top.

MONDAY BANNERS

No banners of the Balkan hosts,
In pomp of triumph flown,
No flaming flags of jubilee
Or Coronal outthrown,
Can match the magic of the scenes
When to the breezes cast,
The pennons of the Monday morn
Flare forth from roof and mast.

The weary city is adorned
Like to a warship "dressed";
'Neath standards of all shapes and hues
The crowd goes ten abreast.
The red-shirt oriflamb surmounts
Each tenemental height,
With blue pajama banderoles
And gonfalons of white.

The streamers tug upon their stays;
A billion clothespins strain
To hold the warlike ensigns back
That all for flight are fain,—
Till down from chimneys gushing near
The black smoke banners fly
And make the wash-day banners black
Before they've time to dry.

[178]

THE OFFICE CAT

You move among momentous things;
Untroubled in your wanderings
By office boys or money kings,
You go your own sweet way.
This modern hall of wealth and work
To you is but a jungle, murk,
Where, like your tiger kin, you lurk
And stalk your rodent prey.

Amid our thrones of cash and greed,
Where brains careen at killing speed,
Calmly the simple life you lead,
Brave, self-supporting, free.
Through love and marriage and divorce
You go unshamed, without remorse,
And rear your families perforce
Quite inexpensively.

When in the boss's cushioned chair
You make your temporary lair,
It's he, not you, who must beware;
Would I had nerve like that!
Never in sycophancy cloaked,
You do not purr till you are stroked;
You scratch when sore, and squeal when soaked;
Sincere, unshackled cat!

You teach no "lesson," point no way
For us to follow and be gay;

[179]

For we regret to know and say
We cannot dine on mice.
You're simply here, demure and mute,
To show, by contrast with the brute,
What fools we were to evolute
When everything was nice.

OYSTER SONG

From your comfortable cloisters
Underneath the rolling sea,
Where the tipsy flounder roysters
In the skate's gay company,
Come, you nifty little oysters,
Come, my dears, and eaten be.

Where you long have loved and courted
Through the summer's jolly ways,
And collected and assorted
Little germs to end our days,
Say, were T. R.'s talks reported
Down among your oyster bays?

Do you know that Dr. Wiley
Says you're getting far too fat —
Says you live a bit too highly —
Always on a drinking bat?
Better cut it out right spryly!
We're reformed — just think o' that!

Lastly, take no foolish chances
Like these human boys and girls;
Give to Loeb no wild romances,
Or he'll pull your mushy curls.
Mark the luckless Adriances,
And be warned: Declare your pearls!

THE POET'S CONSOLATION

You'd almost think, to hear the beggars tell it,
That poets were a people very poor;
But this sad Muse of mine — I wouldn't sell it
For all the wealth of Mrs. Pompadour.
I *will* admit the springtime market's heavy;
I don't gain much in summer or the fall;
But oh, when Christmas comes around, I levy
A toll on poesy that beats 'em all!

A quatrain to sweet Agnes saves eight dollars,
And roses couldn't half so warm her "soul."
I'm sure a sonnet on "Pragmatic Scholars"
To Anne is dearer than a ton of coal.
Diamonds for Alice, my betrothed, my glowing
Star of delight? Not on your life! I'll send
My photo, hand on brow, sad eyes, tie flowing —
Thus shall her trust declare a dividend.

Oh, yes, they *all* will *marry* others fellows,—
Dull, short-haired chaps who *work* for sordid
gold!
But when sure fame my happy memory mellow,
When foes are dead and critics cease to scold,
From dim old attics, where these maidens throw
'em,
My discards, which no editor would buy,
Will rise, each hailed as "*an unpublished
poem*"! —
A word of glory — *after* poets die.

[182]

THANKSGIVING

WHY, yes, I'll come in just for you, dear,
And watch the swift courses go by,
And every entrée will be new, dear,
With dainties unnumbered to vie.
Your guests, they are many and witty,
"The very best people," I know,
Though women, I think, were more pretty
Full forty Thanksgivings ago.

Your table bends low with its wealth, dear,
Of linen and silver and gold,
And proudly I call for your health, dear,
Though deep in my dreamings of old
I see the white road that so lithely
I trod through the earliest snow,
To dine with you humbly, though blithely,
These forty Thanksgivings ago.

We've "risen in life," so you say, dear,
Our money has changed the old ways;
We've turned to the yacht and the play, dear,
For the joys of our merrier days.
But, somehow, as down the long table
I hear the sham chatter aflow —
Sweet wife, what were satins and sable
Those forty Thanksgivings ago!

"The hit of the season," they cry, dear,
"The loveliest feast of the fall."

[183]

But, oh, what an empty good-by, dear!
I'm glad to be rid of them all.
Come sit where the fire is gleaming —
Must dress for the play? Yes, I know —
Forgive an old fool for his dreaming
Of forty Thanksgivings ago.

ON CHRISTMAS EVE

ON Christmas Eve, long, long ago,
With Sue and Dick and Polly
I hung the pallid mistletoe
And wreathed the blithesome holly;
With Polly — that entrancing miss,
With smiles all pink and pearly —
What wonder if a Christmas kiss
I stole a trifle early.

On Christmas Eve tonight I doze
Before the embers dying,
Till little Polly's eyes shall close
And Dick shall cease his prying,—
Then once again I climb and twine
The mistletoe and holly,
And sweet with years, like olden wine,
I steal a kiss from Polly.

BALLADE OF SIR FURNACE

HAVE I some knightly sires old,
Dim-blazoned on Time's 'seutcheon gray,
Or 'mid this modern joust for gold
Is Chivalry returning? Say!
I only know at break of day
I rise in fury manifold,
And sally forth to shake or slay
Sir Furnace, Knight forever cold!
I heard him in his donjon-hold;
Poker in rest, I front the fray;
Though sometimes, to my grief untold,
I find him "out," but not away;
We clash! In terrible dismay
His armor clanks with groans outrolled.
A "heated" combat, say you? Nay,
Sir Furnace, Knight forever cold.
Oh, not for fame my breast is bold;
I am no craven popinjay;
To Love's good fight my soul is sold;
Hark! 'Tis my Lady, by my fey!
And does she chaunt a roundelay?
Or doth my Lady merely scold?
E'en Love will freeze beneath his sway,
Sir Furnace, Knight forever cold.

L'ENVOI

Warrior, I sing not all my lay;
The D's and dashes I remould;
But oh, what makes you squeak and bray,
Sir Furnace, Knight forever coaled?

ON THE INSIDE

THE man who makes the pictures for the paper
sits in there
And o'er the low partition you can hear him
softly swear,
As he traces fancy borders and devises letters
quaint,
As he splashes smoke and fire or makes things
for kids to paint.

The man who makes the verses for the paper
sits in here;
He grinds 'em out and drags 'em out and flings
'em far and near;
And though he's busy, still, of course, he some-
how finds the time
To hurl a little curse at Fate for wrapping him
in rime.

The men who on the street cars read the paper
sit them down
And turn to news of foreign parts or of the bus-
tling town.
They see a flaring picture or a line of rime
that's worse,
And they scoff: "What can you look for in
newspaper art and verse?"

On this side there's a genial knock, on that a
scoffing jeer;
The chief says: "Put this news in rime and
throw a picture here."
It's done; and if the Muses wail, and if the
world must curse,
Think of the face it takes to spring newspaper
art and verse!

THE VISIONARY

'Twas the night before payday, and all through
the house
The sandwich-fed hirelings were dreaming of
grouse,
Of lobster and cocktails and hot whisky
slings —
Their thoughts were equipped with most pan-
tryfied wings,
While empty their pockets hung limp o'er each
chair,
And poverty tainted the sharp autumn air,—
When all of a sudden, behind the bed's post,
Appeared to my vision — great heavens! the
Ghost!

He stood there with money bags bent to a crook,
And pity shown clear in his pitiful look;
His robes were all white and his hair trickled
down
Till it covered the floor like a snowy white gown;
He made one short step, as if coming my way,
And a jingle came forth from those bundles of
pay,
While in tones that suffused the apartment with
pain,
He started to speak and then started again:

"I'm done," he declared; "I'm sick of my post,
Though I always have walked like a gentleman's
ghost,
And I'm ordered to turn the stuff over to you,
As a fellow who knows what a fellow should do."
I heard with a throb and felt with a gasp
What wonders of life were within my small
grasp;
Then I groaned and turned over and turned up
the light,
And dreamed something cheap for the rest of
the night.

AMBITION

To set the pace for other folk
In Fashion's very fiercest swim,
To always know the latest joke,
The latest Her, the latest Him,
To never miss the newest play,
To read no book that's two days old,
To sip the last fantastic spray
Of foreign poisons, hot or cold,
To be the first for every fad
And never last to lay it by,
To live all up-to-dately bad
And up-to-dately then to die —
These are the ways for which he yearns;
This is his prayer for wide renown: —
To be acclaimed where'er he turns
The up-to-dateest thing in town.

DEBUTANTES

En's head a shining ballroom is,
Each hair a debutante,
And though they still keep coming out,
Still do they grow more scant.

HOME NOTES

Who is it swears so fearfully
Anent each passing rumor? —
Speak low — it is the funny man
Who is all out of humor.

OH, GROGAN!

OBSERVE the haughty office boy —
He toils not, neither does he spin;
He butteth out when wanted most,
And when least wanted, butteth in.

POOR CHILD

Out of the suds the baby came;
And just because she had no nighty,
And just because she had no name —
They went and called her Aphrodite!

[196]

ON ACCOUNT

ON account of the peerage of France
A maid made a flight at romance.
She had plenty of cash,
So she struck up a mash
On a Count of the peerage of France.

[197]

THE FINISH

UPON the precipice's edge
He sued for her fair hand,
As close upon the barren ledge
They held their dizzy stand.

His back was to the deep abyss —
Who knows what demon drove her? —
But that abominable miss
Quite calmly threw him over.

